

Special Response Unit

408.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Crisis Response Unit (CRU) is comprised of two specialized teams: the Crisis Negotiation Team (CNT) and the Special Response Team (SRT). The unit has been established to provide specialized support in handling critical field operations where intense negotiations and/or special tactical deployment methods beyond the capacity of field officers appear to be necessary. This policy is written to comply with the guidelines established in the Attorney General's Commission on Special Weapons and Tactics Report (September 2002) and the POST 2005 SWAT Operational Guidelines and Standardized Training Recommendations (Penal Code § 13514.1).

408.1.1 OPERATIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

The Policy Manual sections pertaining to the Special Response Unit are divided into Administrative and Operational Policy and Procedures. Since situations that necessitate the need for such a police response vary greatly from incident to incident and such events often demand on-the-scene evaluation, the Operational Policy outlined in this manual section serves as a guideline to Department personnel, allowing for appropriate on scene decision making as required. The Administrative Procedures, however, are more restrictive and few exceptions should be made.

408.1.2 SWAT TEAM DEFINED

The Special Response Unit is a designated unit of law enforcement officers that is specifically trained and equipped to work as a coordinated team to resolve critical incidents that are so hazardous, complex, or unusual that they may exceed the capabilities of first responders or investigative units including, but not limited to, hostage taking, barricaded suspects, snipers, terrorist acts and other high-risk incidents. As a matter of department policy, such a unit may also be used to serve high-risk warrants, both search and arrest, where public and officer safety issues warrant the use of such a unit.

408.1.3 TACTICAL COMMANDER

Under the direction of the Chief of Police, through the Field Operations Bureau Deputy Chief, the Special Response Unit shall be managed by a Commander, who will serve as the Tactical Commander.

408.1.4 TEAM LEADERS

The Crisis Negotiation and Special Response Teams will each be supervised by a sergeant, who will serve as the respective Team Leaders. The Team Leaders shall be selected by the Chief of Police upon specific recommendation by staff and the Tactical Commander. The Team Leader's primary responsibility is to supervise the operations of their team, including deployment, training, first line participation, and other duties as directed by the SRU Commander.

408.2 LEVELS OF CAPABILITY/TRAINING

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408.2.1 LEVEL I

A level I SWAT team is a basic team capable of providing containment and intervention with critical incidents that exceed the training and resources available to line-level officers. This does not include ad hoc teams of officers that are formed around a specific mission, detail or incident (e.g. active shooter response). Generally 5% of the basic team's on-duty time should be devoted to training.

408.2.2 LEVEL II

A level II, Intermediate level SWAT team is capable of providing containment and intervention. Additionally, these teams possess tactical capabilities above the Level I teams. These teams may or may not work together on a daily basis, but are intended to respond to incidents as a team. At least 5% of their on-duty time should be devoted to training with supplemental training for tactical capabilities above the Level I team.

408.2.3 LEVEL III

A Level III, Advanced level SWAT team is a SWAT team whose personnel function as a full-time unit. Generally 25% of their on-duty time is devoted to training. Level III teams operate in accordance with contemporary best practices. Such units possess both skills and equipment to utilize tactics beyond the capabilities of Level I and Level II teams.

408.3 POLICY

It shall be the policy of this department to maintain a Special Response Team and to provide the equipment, manpower, and training necessary to maintain the team. The team should develop sufficient resources to perform three basic operational functions:

- (a) Command and Control
- (b) Containment
- (c) Entry/Apprehension/Rescue

It is understood it is difficult to categorize specific capabilities for critical incidents. Training needs may vary based on the experience level of the team personnel, team administrators and potential incident commanders. Nothing in this policy shall prohibit individual teams from responding to a situation that exceeds their training levels due to the exigency of the circumstances. The preservation of innocent human life is paramount.

408.3.1 POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

A needs assessment should be conducted to determine the type and extent of missions and operations appropriate to this agency. The assessment should consider the team's capabilities and limitations and should be reviewed annually by the SRU Commander or his/her designee.

408.3.2 ORGANIZATIONAL PROCEDURES

This department shall develop a separate written set of organizational procedures which should address, at minimum, the following:

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- (a) Locally identified specific missions the team is capable of performing.
- (b) Team organization and function.
- (c) Personnel selection and retention criteria.
- (d) Training and required competencies.
- (e) Procedures for activation and deployment.
- (f) Command and control issues, including a clearly defined command structure.
- (g) Multi-agency response.
- (h) Out-of-jurisdiction response.
- (i) Specialized functions and supporting resources.

408.3.3 OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

This department shall develop a separate written set of operational procedures in accordance with the determination of their level of capability, using sound risk reduction practices. The operational procedures should be patterned after the National Tactical Officers Association Suggested SWAT Best Practices. Because such procedures are specific to SRU members and will outline tactical and officer safety issues, they are not included within this policy. The operational procedures should include, at minimum, the following:

- (a) Designated personnel responsible for developing an operational or tactical plan prior to, and/or during SRU operations (time permitting).
 - 1. All SRU team members should have an understanding of operational planning.
 - 2. SRU team training should consider planning for both spontaneous and planned events.
 - 3. SRU teams should incorporate medical emergency contingency planning as part of the SRU operational plan.
- (b) Plans for mission briefings conducted prior to an operation, unless circumstances require immediate deployment.
 - 1. When possible, briefings should include the specialized units and supporting resources.
- (c) Protocols for a sustained operation should be developed which may include relief, rotation of personnel and augmentation of resources.
- (d) A generic checklist to be worked through prior to initiating a tactical action as a means of conducting a threat assessment to determine the appropriate response and resources necessary, including the use of SRU.
- (e) The appropriate role for a trained negotiator.

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- (f) A standard method of determining whether or not a warrant should be regarded as high-risk.
- (g) A method for deciding how best to serve a high-risk warrant with all reasonably foreseeable alternatives being reviewed in accordance with risk/benefit criteria prior to selecting the method of response.
- (h) Post incident scene management including:
 - 1. Documentation of the incident.
 - 2. Transition to investigations and/or other units.
 - 3. Debriefing after every deployment of the SRU team.
 - (a) After-action team debriefing provides evaluation and analysis of critical incidents and affords the opportunity for individual and team assessments, helps to identify training needs, and reinforces sound risk management practices.
 - (b) Such debriefing should not be conducted until involved officers have had the opportunity to individually complete necessary reports or provide formal statements.
 - (c) In order to maintain candor and a meaningful exchange, debriefing will generally not be recorded.
 - (d) When appropriate, debriefing should include specialized units and resources.
- (i) Sound risk management analysis.
- (j) Standardization of equipment deployed.

408.4 TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The SRU Commander shall conduct an annual SRU Training needs assessment to ensure that training is conducted within team capabilities, department policy and the training guidelines as established by POST (11 C.C.R. § 1084).

408.4.1 INITIAL TRAINING

SRU team operators and SRU supervisors/team leaders should not be deployed until successful completion of the POST-certified Basic SWAT Course or its equivalent.

- (a) To avoid unnecessary or redundant training, previous training completed by members may be considered equivalent when the hours and content (topics) meet or exceed department requirements or POST standardized training recommendations.

408.4.2 UPDATED TRAINING

Appropriate team training for the specialized SRU functions and other supporting resources should be completed prior to full deployment of the team.

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SRU team operators and SRU supervisors/team leaders should complete update or refresher training as certified by POST, or its equivalent, every 24 months.

408.4.3 SUPERVISION AND MANAGEMENT TRAINING

Command and executive personnel are encouraged to attend training for managing the SRU function at the organizational level to ensure personnel who provide active oversight at the scene of SRU operations understand the purpose and capabilities of the teams.

Command personnel who may assume incident command responsibilities should attend SWAT or Critical Incident Commander course or its equivalent. SRU command personnel should attend a POST-certified SWAT commander or tactical commander course, or its equivalent.

408.4.4 SWAT ONGOING TRAINING

Training shall be coordinated by the SRT Commander. The SRT Commander may conduct monthly training exercises that include a review and critique of personnel and their performance in the exercise in addition to specialized training. Training shall consist of the following:

- (a) Each SRT member shall perform a physical fitness test twice each year. A minimum qualifying score must be attained by each team member.
- (b) Any SRT team member failing to attain the minimum physical fitness qualification score will be notified of the requirement to retest and attain a qualifying score. Within 30 days of the previous physical fitness test date, the member required to qualify shall report to a team supervisor and complete the entire physical fitness test. Failure to qualify after a second attempt may result in dismissal from the team.
- (c) Those members who are on vacation, ill, or are on light duty status with a doctor's note of approval on the test date, shall be responsible for reporting to a team supervisor and taking the test within 30 days of their return to regular duty. Any member, who fails to arrange for and perform the physical fitness test within the 30-day period, shall be considered as having failed to attain a qualifying score for that test period.
- (d) Quarterly, each SRT team member shall perform the mandatory SWAT handgun qualification course. The qualification course shall consist of the SWAT Basic Drill for the handgun. Failure to qualify will require that officer to seek remedial training from a team range master approved by the SRT Commander. Team members who fail to qualify must retest within 30 days. Failure to qualify within 30 days with or without remedial training may result in dismissal from the team.

408.4.5 TRAINING SAFETY

Use of a designated safety officer should be considered for all tactical training.

408.4.6 SCENARIO BASED TRAINING

SRU teams should participate in scenario-based training that simulates the tactical operational environment. Such training is an established method of improving performance during an actual deployment.

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408.4.7 TRAINING DOCUMENTATION

Individual and team training shall be documented and records maintained by the SRT Commander.

408.5 UNIFORMS, EQUIPMENT, AND FIREARMS

408.5.1 UNIFORMS

SRU members from this agency should wear uniforms that clearly identify team members as law enforcement officers. It is recognized that certain tactical conditions may require covert movement. Attire may be selected appropriate to the specific mission.

408.5.2 EQUIPMENT

The SRU team from this agency should be adequately equipped to meet the specific mission(s) identified by the agency.

408.5.3 FIREARMS

Weapons and equipment used by SRT, the specialized units, and the supporting resources should be agency-issued or approved, including any modifications, additions, or attachments.

408.5.4 OPERATIONAL READINESS INSPECTIONS

The CRU Commander shall appoint a CRU supervisor to perform operational readiness inspections of all unit equipment at least quarterly. The result of the inspection will be forwarded to the CRU Commander in writing. The inspection will include personal equipment issued to members of the unit, operational equipment maintained in the CRU facility and equipment maintained or used in CRU vehicles.

408.6 MANAGEMENT/SUPERVISION OF CRISIS RESPONSE UNIT

The Commander of the SRU shall be selected by the Chief of Police upon recommendation of staff.

408.6.1 PRIMARY UNIT MANAGER

Under the direction of the Chief of Police, through the Field Operations Division Commander, the Special Response Team shall be managed by a commander.

408.6.2 TEAM SUPERVISORS

The Negotiation Team and Special Response Team will each be supervised by a sergeant.

The team supervisors shall be selected by the Chief of Police upon specific recommendation by staff and the SRT Commander.

The following represent the supervisor responsibilities for the Special Response Unit.

- (a) The Negotiation Team supervisor's primary responsibility is to supervise the operations of the Negotiation Team which will include deployment, training, first line participation, and other duties as directed by the SRT Commander.

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- (b) The Special Response Team supervisor's primary responsibility is to supervise the operations of the Special Response Team, which will include deployment, training, first line participation, and other duties as directed by the SRT Commander.

408.7 CRISIS NEGOTIATION TEAM ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

The Crisis Negotiation Team has been established to provide skilled verbal communicators who may be utilized to attempt to de-escalate and effect surrender in critical situations where suspects have taken hostages, barricaded themselves, or have suicidal tendencies.

The following procedures serve as directives for the administrative operation of the Crisis Negotiation Team.

408.7.1 SELECTION OF PERSONNEL

Interested sworn personnel, who are off probation, shall submit a change of assignment request to their appropriate Division Commander. A copy will be forwarded to the SRT Commander and the Crisis Negotiation Team supervisor. Qualified applicants will then be invited to an oral interview. The oral board will consist of the SRT Commander, the Crisis Negotiation Team supervisor, and a third person to be selected by the two. Interested personnel shall be evaluated by the following criteria:

- (a) Recognized competence and ability as evidenced by performance.
- (b) Demonstrated good judgment and understanding of critical role of negotiator and negotiation process.
- (c) Effective communication skills to ensure success as a negotiator.
- (d) Special skills, training, or appropriate education as it pertains to the assignment.
- (e) Commitment to the unit, realizing that the assignment may necessitate unusual working hours, conditions, and training obligations.

The oral board shall submit a list of successful applicants to staff for final selection.

408.7.2 TRAINING OF NEGOTIATORS

Those officers selected as members of the Negotiation Team should attend the Basic Negotiators Course as approved by the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) prior to primary use in an actual crisis situation. Untrained officers may be used in a support or training capacity. Additional training will be coordinated by the team supervisor.

A minimum of one training day per quarter will be required to provide the opportunity for role playing and situational training necessary to maintain proper skills. This will be coordinated by the team supervisor.

Continual evaluation of a team member's performance and efficiency as it relates to the positive operation of the unit shall be conducted by the team supervisor. Performance and efficiency levels, established by the team supervisor, will be met and maintained by all team members. Any member

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of the Negotiation Team who performs or functions at a level less than satisfactory shall be subject to dismissal from the unit.

408.7.3 HOSTAGES & BARRICADED SUSPECTS

Hostage situations and barricaded suspects present unique problems for agencies. The protection of the public and law enforcement personnel is of the utmost importance. Proper planning and training will tend to reduce the risks involved with these incidents.

408.7.4 DEFINITIONS

Hostage-A person held by one party in a conflict as security so that specified terms will be met by the opposing party.

Barricaded Suspect-A person who takes a position of cover or concealment or maintains a position in a structure and who resists capture by law enforcement personnel. A barricaded suspect may be armed or suspected of being armed.

408.7.5 HOSTAGE NEGOTIATIONS

Promises of immunity or leniency and payment of ransom demands are rarely effective and will generally not be offered to barricaded suspects. Trained hostage negotiators, however, will be permitted to exercise flexibility in each situation based upon the circumstances presented and consistent with their training. Personnel involved in barricaded/hostage situations are urged to exercise patience and extreme caution. The use of deadly force against any armed suspect will be governed by Policy Manual §300, with particular regard directed toward the safety of hostages.

408.7.6 FIRST RESPONDER RESPONSIBILITY

Until the Incident Commander has been designated, the first officer on the scene of an actual or potential hostage/barricade situation shall consider the following:

- (a) Attempt to avoid confrontation in favor of controlling and containing the situation until the arrival of trained personnel and/or trained hostage negotiation personnel;
- (b) Notification of tactical and hostage negotiation personnel;
- (c) Notification of appropriate persons within and outside the agency, such as command officers, dog handlers, or helicopter pilots;
- (d) Establishment of inner and outer perimeters;
- (e) Evacuation of bystanders and injured persons;
- (f) Establishment of central command post and appropriate chain of command;
- (g) Request for ambulance, rescue, fire and surveillance equipment;
- (h) Authorization for news media access and news media policy;
- (i) Pursuit/surveillance vehicles and control of travel routes.

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408.8 SWAT TEAM ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

The Special Response Team was established to provide a skilled and trained team which may be deployed during events requiring specialized tactics in such situations as cases where suspects have taken hostages and/or barricaded themselves as well as prolonged or predictable situations in which persons armed or suspected of being armed pose a danger to themselves or others.

The following procedures serve as directives for the administrative operation of the Special Response Team.

408.8.1 SELECTION OF PERSONNEL

Interested sworn personnel who are off probation shall submit a change of assignment request to their appropriate Division Commander, a copy of which will be forwarded to the SRT Commander and other SRT supervisors. Those qualifying applicants will then be invited to participate in the testing process. The order of the tests will be given at the discretion of the SRT Commander. The testing process will consist of an oral board, physical agility, SWAT basic handgun, and team evaluation.

- (a) Oral board: The oral board will consist of personnel selected by the SRT Commander. Applicants will be evaluated by the following criteria:
 - 1. Recognized competence and ability as evidenced by performance;
 - 2. Demonstrated good judgment and understanding of critical role of SRT member;
 - 3. Special skills, training, or appropriate education as it pertains to this assignment; and,
 - 4. Commitment to the unit, realizing that the additional assignment may necessitate unusual working hours, conditions, and training obligations.
- (b) Physical agility: The physical agility test is designed to determine the physical capabilities of the applicant as it relates to performance of SRT-related duties. The test and scoring procedure will be established by the SRT Commander. A minimum qualifying score shall be attained by the applicant to be considered for the position.
- (c) SWAT basic handgun: Candidates will be invited to shoot the qualification course for the handgun and rifle. A minimum qualifying score must be attained to qualify.
- (d) Team evaluation: Current team members will evaluate each candidate on his or her field tactical skills, teamwork, ability to work under stress, communication skills, judgment, and any special skills that could benefit the team.
- (e) A list of successful applicants shall be submitted to staff, by the SRT Commander, for final selection.

408.8.2 TEAM EVALUATION

Continual evaluation of a team member's performance and efficiency as it relates to the positive operation of the unit shall be conducted by the SRT Commander. The performance and efficiency

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level, as established by the team supervisor, will be met and maintained by all SRT members. Any member of the SRT who performs or functions at a level less than satisfactory shall be subject to dismissal from the team.

408.9 OPERATION GUIDELINES FOR CRISIS RESPONSE UNIT

The following procedures serve as guidelines for the operational deployment of the Special Response Team. Generally, the Special Response Team and the Crisis Negotiation Team will be activated together. It is recognized, however, that a tactical team may be used in a situation not requiring the physical presence of the Crisis Negotiation Team such as warrant service operations. This shall be at the discretion of the SRT Commander.

408.9.1 ON-SCENE DETERMINATION

The supervisor in charge on the scene of a particular event will assess whether the Special Response Team is to respond to the scene. Upon final determination by the Watch Commander, he/she will notify the SRT Commander.

408.9.2 APPROPRIATE SITUATIONS FOR USE OF CRISIS RESPONSE UNIT

The following are examples of incidents which may result in the activation of the Special Response Team:

- (a) Barricaded suspects who refuse an order to surrender.
- (b) Incidents where hostages are taken.
- (c) Cases of suicide threats.
- (d) Arrests of dangerous persons.
- (e) Any situation that could enhance the ability to preserve life, maintain social order, and ensure the protection of property.

408.9.3 OUTSIDE AGENCY REQUESTS

Requests by field personnel for assistance from outside agency crisis units must be approved by the Watch Commander. Deployment of the Seaside Police Department Special Response Team in response to requests by other agencies must be authorized by a Division Commander.

408.9.4 MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL SWAT OPERATIONS

The Special Response Team, including relevant specialized units and supporting resources, should develop protocols, agreements, MOU's, or working relationships to support multi-jurisdictional or regional responses.

- (a) If it is anticipated that multi-jurisdictional SWAT operations will regularly be conducted; SWAT multi-agency and multi-disciplinary joint training exercises are encouraged.
- (b) Members of the Special Response Unit shall operate under the policies, procedures and command of the Seaside Police Department when working in a multi-agency situation.

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408.9.5 MOBILIZATION OF CRISIS RESPONSE UNIT

The On-Scene supervisor shall make a request to the Watch Commander for the Special Response Unit. The Watch Commander shall then notify the SRT Commander. If unavailable, a team supervisor shall be notified. The Watch Commander will then notify the Field Operations Division Commander as soon as practical.

The Watch Commander should advise the SRT Commander with as much of the following information which is available at the time:

- (a) The number of suspects, known weapons and resources.
- (b) If the suspect is in control of hostages.
- (c) If the suspect is barricaded.
- (d) The type of crime involved.
- (e) If the suspect has threatened or attempted suicide.
- (f) The location of the command post and a safe approach to it.
- (g) The extent of any perimeter and the number of officers involved.
- (h) Any other important facts critical to the immediate situation and whether the suspect has refused an order to surrender.

The SRT Commander or supervisor shall then call selected officers to respond.

408.9.6 FIELD UNIT RESPONSIBILITIES

While waiting for the Special Response Unit, field personnel should, if safe, practical and sufficient resources exist:

- (a) Establish an inner and outer perimeter.
- (b) Establish a command post outside of the inner perimeter.
- (c) Establish an arrest/response team. The team actions may include:
 - 1. Securing any subject or suspect who may surrender.
 - 2. Taking action to mitigate a deadly threat or behavior.
- (d) Evacuate any injured persons or citizens in the zone of danger.
- (e) Attempt to establish preliminary communication with the suspect. Once the SRU has arrived, all negotiations should generally be halted to allow the negotiators and SRT time to set up.
- (f) Be prepared to brief the SRU Commander on the situation.
- (g) Plan for, and stage, anticipated resources.

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408.9.7 ON-SCENE COMMAND RESPONSIBILITIES

Upon arrival of the Special Response Unit at the scene, the Incident Commander shall brief the SRT Commander and team supervisors about the situation. Upon review, it will be the Incident Commander's decision, with input from the SRT Commander, whether to deploy the Special Response Team. Once the Incident Commander authorizes deployment, the SRT Commander will be responsible for the tactical portion of the operation. The Incident Commander shall continue supervision of the command post operation, outer perimeter security, and support for the Special Response Unit. The Incident Commander and the SRT Commander (or his or her designee) shall maintain communications at all times.

Unless otherwise relieved by a supervisor, the initial officer at the scene is responsible for completion of reports or coordination of reports for the hostage/barricade incident.

The Incident Commander, Tactical Commander, and Team Leaders shall file operational reports on the actions taken.

408.9.8 COMMUNICATION WITH CRISIS RESPONSE UNIT PERSONNEL

All of those persons who are non-Special Response Unit personnel should refrain from any non-emergency contact or interference with any member of the unit during active negotiations. Operations require the utmost in concentration by involved personnel and, as a result, no one should interrupt or communicate with SRT personnel directly. All non-emergency communications shall be channeled through the Negotiation Team Supervisor or his or her designee.