

	<b>GENERAL ORDER</b>	
	<b>Effective: 10-01-2021</b>	<b># 09-07</b>
	<b>Section: Operations</b>	<b>Replaces or Modifies: GO #09-07</b>
	<b>Title: High Risk Scenes and Tactical Teams</b>	
<b>Issued by: Chief Mattie Provost</b>		

**Purpose:**

The Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team, is a designated section of the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office whose members are tested, selected, trained, equipped and assigned to resolve critical incidents involving a threat to public safety which would otherwise exceed the capabilities of traditional law enforcement first responders and/or investigative units.

The primary characteristic of the SWAT Team, distinguishing it from other units within the agency, is the focus of effort. The SWAT Team is focused on tactical resolutions, as opposed to other functions. The purpose of the SWAT Team is to increase the likelihood of safely resolving critical incidents; however, additional responsibilities for which the SWAT Team is tasked include specialized support for the agency's Patrol, and Criminal Investigations Divisions and training of agency personnel.

The primary purpose of the SWAT Team is to provide a systematic approach to saving lives in accordance with the priorities of life and specific standards set forth herein, in concert with the totality of the circumstances.

While life safety is a priority of the Team, the specific circumstances will dictate the level of force necessary to adequately protect the public and deputies involved. Resolution of some incidents may require the specific application of various levels of force, up to and including, deadly force.

The additional purpose of this General Order is to establish procedures for SWAT activations, training requirements, and to establish a generalized threat assessment and operational plan to be used by all Divisions within the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office.

**Policy:**

The Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office recognizes that certain situations carry a greater risk of danger and response to these scenes require specific prior anticipation and planning. It is therefore the policy of FBCSO that all employees follow these guidelines in assisting them to perform their duties in the safest and most effective manner. The Operational Commander or SWAT Commander shall be notified and/or consulted in all high risk scenes as defined below and prior to any warrant service that possesses the potential for high risk to life and property. It is the policy of the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office that a threat assessment shall be utilized in the planning of all warrant services to determine the level of threat the warrant service rises to.

## **Definitions:**

**SWAT** - Unless otherwise noted in this General Order, this term refers to the Fort Bend County Regional West Division Team.

**Operational Commander**-The Operational Commander will be of the rank of Captain or higher and will have overall command of a special threat situation. If a situation occurs in which the Operational Commander must make a scene, then he/she will assume the role as Incident Commander.

**Incident Commander**-The Incident Commander for a special threat situation shall be the highest ranking officer at the scene. The authority of Incident Commander can be transferred once a higher ranking authority has arrived on scene.

**SWAT Commander**-The SWAT Commander shall have authority over tactical operations during a special threat situation. The SWAT Commander shall meet the minimum requirements set forth by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and in accordance with the National Tactical Officer's Association.

**Active Shooter**- One or more suspects who participate in a random or systematic shooting spree, demonstrating intent to continuously harm others. An active shooter's overriding objective appears to be that of mass murder rather than other criminal conduct such as robbery or hostage taking.

**Barricaded Subject**- Any person who has demonstrated capability and/or stated the intent to cause death or serious bodily injury to any person, including themselves. Any person who has achieved tactical superiority by location or the use of a physical obstruction (e.g., an open field, a building, a vehicle, any natural or man-made barrier).

**Hostage Situation**- Any incident in which the possibility exists or the available information indicates that a barricaded suspect may be holding a hostage.

**Debriefing / Interviewing**- Questioning designed to obtain all useful information for a formal report.

**Face-to-Face Communications**- Communications in which an officer in the kill zone is not using cover or concealment and is able to see and be seen by the suspect.

**Inner Perimeter** - The area of containment closest to the suspect.

**Objective**- The physical location where a barricaded suspect or hostage is believed to be located.

**Outer Perimeter**- The area of containment that prevents outsiders from interfering with or being endangered by the threat situation.

**Safe Route**- Directions to the scene for responding officers that direct them around the kill zone.

**Special Threat Situation**- Any situation involving a sniper, barricaded suspect, hostage situation, active shooter, terrorist activity, or threatened suicide involving a

weapon or from an elevated structure such as a bridge or building.

**Terrorist Activity**- Any in-progress act of violence or threat thereof that creates or is designed to create fear of death or imminent bodily injury in the minds of others and is intended to intimidate governments or citizen populations in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological.

**Apprehension**- The arrest or apprehension of armed or potentially armed suspect(s) where there is the likelihood of armed resistance.

**Warrant Service**- The service of search or arrest warrants where there is a likelihood of armed or potentially armed suspect(s) and there is the potential of armed resistance.

**Sniper Situation**- The firing upon citizens and / or public safety personnel by an armed suspect, whether stationary or mobile.

**General Special Operations**- Any law enforcement tactical operation, approved by the Sheriff, Chief Deputy, or SWAT commander that requires the use of special tactics, training or equipment to be safely accomplished.

## **Procedure:**

### I. SWAT Deployment Procedure:

#### A. Special Threat Situations

- i. When the potential for a special threat situation occurs, dispatch shall notify the patrol supervisor over the district and Watch Commander. The patrol supervisor shall make the scene and determine whether the call is a special threat situation. If the patrol supervisor determines there is a special threat situation, the Watch Commander will be notified and is required to make the scene.
- ii. If the Watch Commander determines the special threat situation exceeds the capabilities of on scene patrol units, the SWAT Commander will be notified and given all pertinent information to make the determination of whether a full team activation, partial team activation, or no activation of SWAT is needed. If the SWAT Commander determines the special threat situation warrants either a full team activation or partial team activation, the Operational Commander or his/her designee will be notified to obtain approval for a SWAT Activation.

#### B. Warrant Service or Pre-Planned Events:

Should any division of the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office or any other agency request the assistance of SWAT for a high risk warrant service or pre-planned event such as dignitary protection, or any general special operation, the following guidelines will be followed.

- i. There must be a threat assessment completed to determine if the warrant service or pre-planned event meets the criteria for SWAT involvement.
- ii. As soon as possible, all pertinent information must be forwarded to the SWAT Commander for review and dissemination to a Team Leader.
- iii. If the SWAT Commander determines the warrant service or pre-planned event meets criteria for SWAT activation, the SWAT Commander will obtain preliminary approval to be the planning process from the Operational Commander.
- iv. Once the planning process is completed, a department approved Operational Plan will

be completed and submitted to the Operational Commander for final approval no less than 24 hours prior to the warrant service or pre-planned event if possible.

C. Crisis Negotiation Team

The Crisis Negotiation Team is an extension of the SWAT team, but will have its own team structure separate from SWAT. The Crisis Negotiation Team will be comprised of a Team Leader and Negotiators. The Crisis Negotiation Team and its members will respond with SWAT to any special threat situation. A minimum of two negotiators will accompany SWAT on any high risk warrant service or pre-planned event. The Crisis Negotiation Team will have a Standard Operating Procedure specific to their job duties, training, and structure.

II. Procedures for Patrol during High Risk Scenes:

A. The first officers to arrive at the scene shall:

- i. Notify the dispatcher that a possible special threat situation exists and request a patrol supervisor from the appropriate district.
- ii. Confine the suspect to the smallest area possible by establishing an inner perimeter.
- iii. If possible, determine if contact with the suspect by telephone is available. Officers shall not use face-to-face communication with an armed suspect without prior approval from the Patrol Supervisor.
- iv. Maintain communications with the suspect only if it stabilizes the situation, but shall avoid constantly contacting a suspect who refuses to communicate.
- v. If communications are established, stabilize the emotionally distraught or violent suspect by doing or refraining from doing the following:
  1. Communicate by telephone if possible.
  2. Express a willingness to help through positive statements. Do not make threatening or intimidating remarks.
  3. Do not beg or plead with the suspect.
  4. Do not agree to any demands made by the suspect.
  5. Do not allow family members or any non-law enforcement personnel to speak with the suspect without prior approval from the operational commander or CNT Team Leader.
- vi. Relay the following information to the dispatcher as soon as it becomes available:
  1. Description of the suspect and any weapons.
  2. Location and number of hostages.
  3. Possible avenues of escape
  4. Safe routes and location to where additional units should respond.
- vii. Detain all witnesses for interviewing by Tactical Operations Division personnel.
- viii. Upon being relieved, immediately report to the command post for debriefing.
- ix. Remain at the scene until debriefed and released by the operational commander.

B. Patrol Supervisor Responsibilities – The first on-scene patrol supervisor shall do all of the following:

- i. Assume the role of Incident Commander and confirm a special threat situation exists, notify the Watch Commander without delay regarding the details of the incident.
- ii. Give the dispatcher all pertinent information about the special threat situation (e.g., the correct location, the number of suspects, and the number of hostages) as soon as the information becomes available.
- iii. Establish and supervise a mobilization point to which all patrol personnel shall report.

- iv. Provide to the operational commander or SWAT commander a diagram of the outer perimeter showing the radio numbers and locations of all patrol units along the perimeter.
- C. Watch Commander Responsibilities:
  - i. Go to the scene and assume overall command of operations until relieved by the operational commander.
  - ii. Ensure patrol officers man the outer perimeter until relieved by SWAT operators.
  - iii. Ensure the establishment of a command post and a press information center.
  - iv. Make notifications to the Command Staff as needed.

III. Structure:

- A. SWAT is currently composed of the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office and the Rosenberg Police Department. SWAT will consist of; Team Commander, Team Assistant Commanders, Team Leaders and Team Members. Persons eligible for initial SWAT assignment must be a commissioned peace officer employed by an agency in Fort Bend County within the inter-local cooperation agreement who meet the requirements for the Probationary Team Member. Team members are on call at all times, with the exception of vacation, sick leave, military or any duty or assignment that would prevent them from responding to callouts. If a team member will be unavailable to respond to a SWAT activation for a significant amount of time due to being on vacation or outside of the county for an extended amount of time, the member must notify a team leader prior to becoming unavailable. The actual composition of the SWAT will be configured for each mission by the Team Leader using whatever assets and SWAT members are available. If more SWAT members respond for a particular mission than are needed, the Team Commander in charge of the operation will order unneeded members to stand down and return to normal duty or go off duty, as is appropriate. Any Team Member who fails to make a call-out will contact the Team Leader at the earliest reasonable opportunity to explain why the call-out was missed.
- B. Following are the different team members on SWAT:
  - i. *Probationary Team Member:*  
Probationary Team Members are allowed to perform support duties on SWAT missions. Probationary Team Members may perform limited entry and scouting duties during tactical operations, at the discretion of and under the supervision of the Team Leader or his designee.
  - ii. *Team Member:*  
An officer who is Team Member qualified has been determined to have the necessary basic training and professional skills to serve as an entry Team Member or scout with minimal supervision. When an officer is qualified as a Team Member, they also will be expected to assist with the training of the team on training day.
  - iii. *Marksmen (individual trained and qualified in use of a precision rifle as defined in TCOLE Rules) / Observer Team:*  
These officers are members of the entry team, and perform secondary duties as designated marksman/observer during specific tactical scenarios. Other officers may be assigned to assist the Marksmen/Observer team.
  - iv. *Full Time Training Coordinator:*

The Full Time Training Coordinator will be responsible for the following duties, but are not limited to:

1. Documentation of training records, to include reporting training to the Gus George Law Enforcement Academy for TCOLE credit.
  2. Documentation of all operational records.
  3. Coordinating all training events and ensuring lesson plans from each instructor are submitted in a timely manner.
  4. Ensuring that all past and current training and operational records are up to date and made available upon request of the Command Staff of the Fort Bend County Sheriffs Office.
- v. *Team Leader:*  
A Team Leader has the capability and authority to plan, lead and conduct tactical operations or lead the Team's response to ongoing critical incidents. A Team Leader has the necessary skill and experience to formulate a response to most any tactical situation and successfully lead the team in the execution of that response. Team Leader will be responsible for the operational activities, organization and training of the team and tactical plans. In the event that there is no Team Commander available, the Team Commander may appoint a Team Leader to serve as acting Team Commander.
- vi. *Assistant SWAT Commander:*  
Person appointed by the SWAT Commander (with approval from the Chief Deputy) to assist in overall command of SWAT.
- vii. *SWAT Commander:*  
Is in overall command of all SWAT operations and personnel assigned to SWAT. Is accountable to the Operational Commander, Chief Deputy, and Sheriff for maintaining SWAT in a state of readiness. The SWAT Commander may delegate duties as is appropriate to the Assistant SWAT Commander.

C. SWAT Member Selection and Removal:

Membership on SWAT is a part time specialized assignment and will be filled in accordance with directions found in FBCSO General Order 03-02. The SWAT Commander is appointed by the Chief Deputy.

SWAT Commander duties in this regard are:

- i. Establish a selection process for SWAT for filling vacancies and establishing eligibility lists as needed. The detailed selection process will be documented in the SWAT Standard Operating Procedures.
- ii. Establish minimum training and experience requirements for each SWAT member (from minimum entry to each further component as listed in the Structure section of this General Order).
- iii. Establish minimum ability (physical and/or mental) requirements for entry and maintenance of assignment, which are addressed in detail in the SWAT Standard Operating Procedure.
- iv. Prior to a process the SWAT Commander will inform the Chief Deputy, sharing the process to be used and once approved will proceed.
- v. Appropriately including Rosenberg PD in the selection process as applicable.

- vi. Order permanent or temporary removal of SWAT member due to failure to meet standards regarding any aspect of team membership or due to request for temporary/permanent removal by a SWAT member.
- vii. The Rosenberg Police Chief may at any time order removal of one of his/her officers.
- viii. If a Rosenberg PD Officer is to be removed by the SWAT Commander the Chief Deputy will be consulted so that the Rosenberg Police Chief may be fully apprised of issues.
- ix. Keep the Chief Deputy informed of any changes to membership in SWAT.

IV. Training and Equipment:

The SWAT Commander shall establish training standards that are to be followed for joining and maintaining membership in SWAT. Any change to training standards shall be approved by the Chief Deputy prior to implementation. The SWAT Commander shall maintain records on all formalized training.

The SWAT Commander shall set standards for all equipment used by SWAT. Standards will include type and mode of employment. Any change to these standards shall be approved by the Chief Deputy prior to implementation.

Standards found in Use of Force General Order 09-02 (including use of restraint devices, intermediate weapons, and breaching/distraction devices) shall be followed at all times and no standard shall deviate from this General Order.

Standards for Firearms are found in General Order 05-01 and shall be followed at all times and no standard shall deviate from this General Order.

SWAT Team members are required to attend 16 hours of monthly training and attend one 40 hour week of training in addition to the monthly training. These training hours are the minimum standards per the National Tactical Officer's Association. If a team member is unable to attend training due to shift shortage or case load, or any other work related reason, the immediate supervisor shall inform the Division Commander. If the team member will not be allowed to train for the previously mentioned reasons, the Division Commander shall get approval from the Major over their Bureau to allow the team member to miss training. If a team member is assigned to a specialized sub-unit, such as energetic breaching, marksman/observer, less than lethal, and robots/drones, these team members will receive an additional 8 hours of training time per month.

Crisis Negotiation Team members are required to attend at least four hours of training per month and will conduct joint training with SWAT at a minimum on a quarterly basis.

V. Planning and Documentation:

After each SWAT activation, a case report will be generated detailing the events that occurred for documentation purposes only. A supplement to the case report will be completed by each team member that participated in the operation. The Original Case report will be completed within 2 days of the operation, and all supplements will be completed within 1 week of the operation. If the operation results in a use of force incident, a separate case report will be generated to document the use of force.

Further planning and documentation of SWAT Training and operations will be addressed in the SWAT Standard Operating Procedures.

VI. Intervening Authority: The Sheriff, Chief Deputy, or Operational Commander may intervene and take command in any situation.