

# **Tactical Response and Operations Standard for Law Enforcement Agencies**



**National Tactical Officers Association**

**Published April, 2018**



## COPYRIGHT

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### **NTOA SWAT Standards**

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**National Tactical Officers Association**

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## NTOA MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the National Tactical Officers Association is to enhance the performance and professional status of law enforcement personnel by providing a credible and proven training resource, as well as a forum for the development of tactics and information exchange. The Association's ultimate goal is to improve public safety and domestic security through training, education and tactical excellence. The National Tactical Officers Association operates in accord with the principles of *Veritas Probitas et Virtus* (Truth, Honesty and Integrity).



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The NTOA Tactical Response and Operations Standard for Law Enforcement Agencies could not have been developed without the combined effort of numerous dedicated SWAT operators and tactical commanders that are members of the NTOA organization. All member comments were received and taken under consideration by the Standard Review Committee.

The National Tactical Officers Association also gratefully acknowledges the hard work and leadership of many of the state and national law enforcement association partners. This document and the critical work of these pioneers, served as a guide for this document.

In addition, the NTOA Standard Review Committee recognizes the work done by the International Association of Chiefs of Police, Patrol and Tactical Operations Sub-Committee (IACP/PTO) on the SWAT Concepts and Issues Paper, October 2010, as well as the 2011 SWAT Glossary document developed by members of the California Association of Tactical Officers (CATO).



## Introduction and Objective

This document is the result of extensive efforts by the National Tactical Officers Association to provide guidance to association members involved in tactical law enforcement operations. The intent of this standard is to better prepare law enforcement to respond not only to emergency and high-risk incidents on a daily basis, but also to respond to a terrorist attack.

It is the position of the NTOA that the decision to form a tactical law enforcement resource, specifically a SWAT team, carries with it the responsibility to provide the ongoing training, equipment, leadership and financial support necessary to create and maintain an effective response capability. Integral to this responsibility is the obligation to deploy and operate these resources in a manner that is consistent with Constitutional principles, with an emphasis on professional deportment under all circumstances.

Where size and/or demographics limit the capabilities of an agency, this standard recommends that multi-jurisdictional resources be combined and coordinated in a manner which is consistent with reliable and safe operations. Over the past 35 years, the National Tactical Officers Association has assisted many law enforcement agencies in developing multi-jurisdictional teams by providing references, documentation and training to facilitate their efforts. The NTOA remains committed and available to any law enforcement agency or its members who require such assistance.

The objective of this document is to establish a basic set of standards for the association's member agencies and to serve as an efficient core set of concepts and principles that improve standardization within the profession of tactical law enforcement services. Any agency that chooses to use this standard as a benchmark for performance and operations does so voluntarily. The NTOA does not mandate compliance with this standard or attach such compliance as a prerequisite for any benefit granted under membership.



## 1.0

## SCOPE OF STANDARD

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- 1.0 The scope of this standard includes concepts and principles that relate to the organization, training, operational tactics, personnel management and equipment of tactical law enforcement teams. The standard will not dictate how member agencies will write and apply any specific policies as it relates to such operations, but rather provide guidance based upon the terminology and collective viewpoint of the NTOA organization and its stakeholder partners.



## 2.0 DEFINING TACTICAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OPERATIONS

- 2.1 The NTOA recognizes that there are many types of specialized tactical teams utilized in law enforcement and they are identified by a number of commonly accepted names. The NTOA offers this set of team titles and corresponding metrics as guidance for its members.
- 2.1.1 Based upon the need to protect the public and ensure the safe delivery of tactical law enforcement services, the NTOA believes that a SWAT Tier 1 team must be mission capable in ALL of the following areas: hostage rescue, barricaded gunman, sniper operations, high-risk warrant service and high-risk apprehension, high-risk security operations, terrorism response, special assignments and other incidents which exceed the capability and/ or capacity of an agency's first responders and/or investigative units. The most resource demanding of these missions is clearly planned deliberate hostage rescue operations. An appropriate number of personnel is necessary to rapidly and effectively dominate a structure and have an adequate number of operators in place for a failed breach. As an example, during a hostage situation occurring at a common residential structure, this would typically require a Team Commander (1) and Team Leader or Tactical Operations Coordinator (1) to run a command post, two Sniper/Observer Teams (4) to cover all sides of the structure, at least four Operators for containment (4), an Immediate Reaction Team of one Team Leader and seven operators (8) and a comparable team of the same size (8) who is given time to plan and rehearse a deliberate rescue plan. Recognizing of course that containment and immediate reaction functions can be shared responsibilities. This is also with the assumption that all team members arrive and the incident can be resolved in one operational period. Those teams that do not possess the appropriate number of personnel, but maintain all of the necessary mission capabilities, are defined as SWAT Tier 2 teams. SWAT Tier 2



teams may be faced with conducting emergency hostage rescue operations if circumstances require it.

2.1.2 Tactical Response Teams are typically formed to address one or more mission capabilities other than deliberate hostage rescue operations, such as warrant service, barricaded subject or some type of high-risk security operations.

2.1.3 Perimeter Control and Containment Teams are typically formed as an immediate response to an ongoing incident and primarily responsible for containing the incident, evacuations and establishing incident command.

**Figure 1**

<b>TYPE</b>	<b>CAPABILITIES</b>	<b>PERSONNEL*</b>
SWAT Tier 1 – a single agency team, multi-jurisdictional team, regional team or through an MOA.	All mission capabilities in Section 3.0 of this standard and is capable of serving as a primary SWAT mutual aid team to another Tier 1 or 2 team.	26 members 1 Team Commander 3 Team Leaders 4 Snipers 18 Operators
SWAT Tier 2 – a single agency team, multi-jurisdictional team, regional team or through an MOA.	All mission capabilities in Section 3.0 of this standard, except planned deliberate hostage rescues. Emergency hostage rescue operations only.	19 members 1 Team Commander 2 Team Leaders 4 Snipers 12 Operators
Tactical Response Team	Can conduct any single or combination of capabilities listed in Section 3.1.2 – 3.1.6.	15 members 1 Team Commander 2 Team Leaders 12 Operators
Perimeter Control and Containment Team	Can conduct all capabilities of Section 2.3 of this standard.	Any number of appropriately trained personnel.

*\* The personnel allocations depicted in Figure 1 represent recommended minimums based upon typical residential applications. They were promulgated as a guideline with input and the concurrence of local, federal and international*



*partners. Jurisdictional conditions including, but not limited to, topography, operational tempo and anticipated mission requirements may necessitate modifications to these configurations.*

- 2.2 Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) and Tactical Response (TRT) teams are designated law enforcement teams, whose members are recruited, 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. SWAT and TRT are accepted titles for teams with specialized training, expertise and equipment as defined above and further defined within this standard. The primary characteristic of such teams that distinguishes them from other units is the focus of effort. Such teams are focused on incident resolution, as opposed to other functions, such as investigation. Their purpose is to increase the likelihood of safely resolving critical incidents. Nothing in this standard is intended to preclude agencies from utilizing specially trained units in areas such as narcotics investigations, felony apprehension and other tasks. However, agencies that do not have their own SWAT team and instead utilize specially trained units should have a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with a SWAT team that recognizes and operates within the guidelines as set forth by this standard. This SWAT team can be a full-time, collateral-duty, multi-jurisdictional or regional team. The agreement should specify that the named SWAT team is the designated entity to be activated for SWAT-specific incidents such as hostage situations, barricade incidents or other high-risk situations requiring specialized capabilities.



SWAT and TRT teams should have the following elements available when appropriate:

- Tactical Command: typically consists of the commander, team leader and command post support personnel such as tactical dispatchers, intelligence officer and incident recorder.
- Containment Team: typically consists of a two-person (or more) element capable of utilizing either lethal or less-lethal force, per area of responsibility. This may also include the use of tactical canine teams.
- Entry Team (either emergency or deliberate): members required will be based upon the mission type, complexity of operational environment and ability to adhere to officer safety priorities.
- Sniper Team: typically consists of a two-person element per area of responsibility.

2.3 Until the arrival of the requested SWAT team, it is recommended that those agencies that do not have SWAT team response capability and currently utilize a Perimeter Control and Containment Team, should focus on engaging in the following activities as time permits:

**Establish an effective perimeter, which *may include*:**

- Coordinating containment/isolation security teams
- Deploying patrol rifle teams
- Deploying canine handlers
- Confirming traffic/pedestrian control
- Deploying aviation support unit
- The deployment and staging of EMS, fire suppression, Haz Mat and decon units.



**Establish a tactical command, which *may include*:**

- Identify safe routes of travel for specialized vehicles (ambulances, armored rescue vehicles, etc.)
- Identify a staging area
- Identify an appropriate incident command post location (consider stand-off distances, required security and other hazards)
- Gather essential tactical elements of information
- Provide a complete and accurate description of suspect(s) and hostage(s) as soon as they are available
- Develop a threat assessment
- Conduct reconnaissance
- Obtain floor plan
- Initiate building labeling/diagramming
- Conduct breach point analysis
- Identify tactical approach routes
- Identify potential sniper hides
- Utilize electronic intelligence
- Make appropriate notifications
- Initiate emergency rescues of “person down” and “officers down”
- Conduct evacuations of innocents and police that may actively or predictably be in danger of being killed or seriously injured
- Initiate a medical threat assessment and establish a liaison with local EMS Services. An initial medical threat assessment should include an estimated number of casualties, identify locations for casualty collection points and medical staging areas, and consider the operational and environmental conditions that may affect operator performance and mission success.



- In the absence of acts of active violence, first responding police officers should be able to perform basic medical care and coordinate with responding EMS units. In an effort to reduce the number of potentially preventable deaths, first responding units should triage casualties for the presence of immediate life-threatening injuries, apply tourniquets and pressure dressings, initiate basic airway maneuvers, and extract casualties to a collection point where they can be handed off to EMS for further care.
- Preserve a crime scene as needed

2.3.1 Once a perimeter is set, law enforcement units should establish an Immediate Action Team in the event that the situation suddenly changes requiring officers on scene to take immediate action. Primary responsibilities of the “Immediate Action Team” are to prevent escape and to take the suspect into custody if surrender occurs. This team should continuously assess and identify its limitations and assist in scene transition to SWAT when appropriate. In the event of a dynamic or rapidly escalating incident such as an active killer situation or one that exigent circumstances may require immediate intervention to save lives, the Immediate Action Team, or a single officer if necessary, will track and move to stop the threat before the suspect kills or seriously injures victims.

2.3.2 Timely request of specialized units such as SWAT and CNT is critical and will greatly increase safety and contribute to a successful resolution. When possible, commence with negotiations once perimeter and Immediate Action Teams are established. This may result in a safe surrender, assist with gathering intelligence and slow the suspect actions, allowing time for SWAT resources to arrive.



- 2.3.3 Any action taken during a high-risk incident before SWAT is able to respond, should be reasonable and necessary. Such decisions should be based on the totality of the circumstances and the safety priorities model. There may be a need for a single officer intervention to a violent event in order to stop an active on-going threat. The above-listed considerations are not mandates, nor all inclusive, and any decision to implement or not implement them should be based upon the training, equipment and capabilities of the officers on scene.



## 3.0 TACTICAL LAW ENFORCEMENT CAPABILITIES

3.1 Each agency should develop the tactical law enforcement capabilities of its team based upon a reasonable threat assessment, a risk analysis and clear direction from the organization's leadership. A vision of what the team will be expected to do will help define the type of team that is needed for the agency and subsequently will help determine what capabilities are necessary. Developing the capabilities of a tactical team begins with a sound training management and budgeting plan. Contemporary training management philosophy encourages a building block approach that begins with individual, element or unit, and then team competencies. Once acceptable levels of competency are achieved, a team is considered capable of performing that specific tactical operation. Such teams should be capable of performing these mission capabilities during both daytime and nighttime lighting conditions and all weather conditions relevant to the team's local environment.

3.1.1 SWAT teams conducting **hostage rescue operations** should train and equip their personnel in the following competencies:

- Mission analysis and threat assessment
- Intelligence gathering techniques
- Reconnaissance techniques
- Technology support (robotics, electronic surveillance)
- Tactical planning (timing and transition of crisis, deliberate, contingency phases and rehearsals)
- Adherence to safety priorities model
- Communication skills to include basic negotiation techniques
- Breaching capability that includes mechanical, thermal and ballistic. **(Tier 1 team must include explosive)**



- Tactical communication techniques
- Containment and surveillance
- Sniper support roles
- Use of armored rescue vehicle and other specialized vehicles
- Officer/victim rescue procedures
- Failed breach tactics
- Diversionary device tactics
  - Fire suppression equipment and tactics
- Chemical agent applications
- Less-lethal applications
- Window porting
- Compromise procedures
- Communication procedures
- Integration of negotiators
- Post incident debriefing and documentation
- Floor plans, photographs
- Unusual incidents (damage, use-of-force, injuries)
- Arrest and control procedures
- Environments
- Open air - sniper initiated
- Stronghold – dynamic and covert
- Vehicle, vessel, aircraft

3.1.2 SWAT teams conducting **barricaded subject operations** should train and equip their personnel in the following competencies:

- Mission analysis and threat assessment
- Determination of criminal offense
- Determination of mental illness



- Consideration of local requirements for search warrant prior to entry
- Intelligence gathering techniques
- Reconnaissance techniques
- Technology support (robotics, electronic surveillance)
- Tactical planning (timing and transition of crisis, deliberate, contingency phases)
- Adherence to safety priorities model
- Officer/victim rescue drills
- Breach point analysis (mechanical, explosive, thermal, ballistic)
- Tactical communication techniques
- Containment and surveillance
- Sniper support roles
- Use of armored rescue vehicle and other specialized vehicles
- Failed breach tactics
- Diversionary device tactics
  - Fire suppression equipment and tactics
- Chemical agent applications
- Less-lethal applications
- Window porting
- Communication procedures
- Integration of negotiators
- Post incident debriefing and documentation
  - Floor plans, photographs
- Unusual incidents (Damage, Use of Force, injuries)
- Arrest and control procedures
- Tactics
- Open air/stronghold
- Vehicle, vessel, aircraft



- EOD/entry integration

3.1.3 SWAT teams conducting **sniper operations** should train and equip their personnel in the following competencies\*:

- Mission analysis and threat assessment
- Intelligence gathering and reconnaissance
- Firearm nomenclature and capabilities
- Shooting through mediums (*i.e.*, vehicles, glass, Lexan, and wood)
- Concealment and camouflage techniques
- Data books and record keeping
- Surveillance and communication
- Ballistics (internal, external and terminal)
- Operational sniper tactics specific to your jurisdiction
- Counter sniper operations
- Hide construction and management
- Individual movement skills
- Observation skills – positive target identification
- Position shooting – standard and unorthodox
- Stress shooting
- Discretionary shooting
- Low light shooting
- Weapon maintenance
- Post shot communication protocols



- Post incident debrief and documentation
- Countering hard target threats

**\*Reference is made to the *American Sniper Association, Sniper Training Matrix.***

3.1.4 SWAT teams conducting **high-risk warrant service and high-risk apprehension operations** should train and equip their personnel in the following competencies:

3.1.4.1 High-risk warrant service

- Mission analysis and threat assessment
- Intelligence gathering techniques
- Reconnaissance techniques
- Tactical planning
- Breach point analysis
- Briefing techniques
- Containment
- Pre-event surveillance
- Failed breach tactics
- Officer/victim rescue procedures
- Diversionary device tactics
- Fire suppression equipment and tactics
- Less-lethal applications
- Window porting
- Compromise procedures
- Communication procedures
  - Announcement procedures
  - Tactical communications
- Post incident documentation



- Floor plans
- Unusual incidents (damage, use of force)
- Arrest and control procedures
- Warrant service options
  - Contain and call out
  - Deliberate search techniques
- Transitional tactics
- Aggressive animal mitigation
- Bomb squad/entry integration
  - Explosive device recognition and mitigation

#### 3.1.4.2 High-risk apprehensions

- Mission analysis and threat assessment
- Stronghold takedowns (see HRWS above)
- Open air environments
  - Tactical tracking (to include coordination with canine)
  - Land navigation
- Multi-Assault Counter Terrorism Action Capabilities (MACTAC)
- Officer/victim rescue drills
- Vehicle takedowns
- Surveillance
  - Air/ground
- Containment/vehicle blocking
- Rear takedowns
- Frontal takedowns
- Side takedowns
- Long gun support
- Canine support



3.1.5 SWAT teams conducting **high-risk security operations** should train and equip their personnel in the following competencies as resources allow:

- Mission analysis and threat assessment
- Dignitary protection support
- Special event security to include additional SWAT personnel and resources
- Prisoner and witness security

3.1.6 SWAT teams conducting **terrorism response operations** should train and equip their personnel in the following competencies:

3.1.6.1 Tactical operations in a contaminated environment

- Mission analysis and threat assessment
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) selection, use, nomenclature, donning, doffing and decontamination procedures
- Adherence to OSHA 1910.132 and 1910.120 (or state equivalent), as well as NFPA 472 Standard for *Competence of Responders to Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction Incidents*
- Familiarization of the NIOSH Emergency Response Resource Guides (<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/emres/ppe.html>)
- Incident Command System and multi-level integration of line level supervisors and managers into a larger command structure

3.1.6.2 Tactical operations integrating SWAT and Bomb Squad

- Mission analysis and threat assessment
- Improvised Explosive Device component and HME (Homemade Explosive) identification and chemical precursor recognition



- Destructive capabilities and scene consequences of tactically deployed IEDs
- IED threat stream planning and intervention/response tactics to include suicide bombers and VBIEDs
- Overview of bomb squad deployment, RSP (render safe procedures) and operational capabilities
- Suicide bomber planning and response tactics

3.2 SWAT and Tactical Response Teams should be equipped appropriately for the mission capabilities they are tasked with. The following lists provide guidance to teams regarding the minimum levels of equipment that are necessary for both SWAT and Tactical Response Teams.

3.2.1 Any officer assigned to either a SWAT Team (Tier 1 or 2) or a Tactical Response Team should be equipped with the following items **assigned to that officer**:

- National Institute of Justice (NIJ) rated Ballistic Vest and/or Plate Carrier
  - Misc. Gear Pouches
- NIJ rated Ballistic Helmet
- Weapon System(s)
- Handgun
  - Holster/Light/Magazines
- Rifle/Sub-gun/Shotgun
  - Optics/Slings/Accessories/Magazines
- Communications Equipment
- Radio, Headset, Ear Piece, PTT (push to talk) switches
- Protective Eyewear/Goggles (Impact Resistant)
- Hearing Protection
- Elbow & Knee Pads



- Protective gloves
- Level D ensemble (Deployment Uniform) appropriate for the local climate and hazards
- Air Purifying Respirators (APR) with National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) approved filters for the hazards they potentially could be exposed to
- Individual First Aid Kit (IFAK)/Tourniquet etc.
- Restraint devices
- Less lethal option unless supported by team equipment

3.2.2 SWAT Teams (Tier 1 or 2) and Tactical Response Teams should be equipped with the following items as **general team equipment** based on mission capabilities:

- Level III/Level IV Ballistic Shield(s), Bunkers and/or Blankets
- Short & Long Range Less Lethal Munitions and Delivery Systems
- Chemical Munitions & Delivery Systems
  - Hand delivered
  - Launch-able
- Precision rifle systems
  - Optics
  - Night vision
- Fire suppression device
- Distraction Devices
  - FSDDs
  - Bang Poles
- Manual Breaching Equipment
  - Ramming Tools
  - Pry Tools
  - Sledge/Bolt Cutter Tools



- Rake and Brake Tools
- Straps and Hooks
- Deployment Vehicle(s)

3.2.3 Tier 1 SWAT Teams, conducting **planned deliberate hostage rescue operations** should be equipped with the following items:

- Armored Rescue Vehicle(s) (ARV)
- Tactical Robot(s)
  - Large Robot Platforms
  - Medium Robot Platforms
  - Small Robot Platforms
- Unmanned Aerial Vehicle(s) (UAV)
- Technical Support/Surveillance Equipment
  - Video/Audio/Fiber Optic Equipment
  - Pole Cameras
  - Under Door Cameras
  - Pinhole Cameras
  - Monitors & Accessories
- Explosive Breaching Equipment
- Specialized Breaching Equipment
  - Ballistic
  - Mechanical
  - Thermal
  - Hydraulic
- Navigation Equipment
  - Night Vision Goggles/Optics
  - Global Positioning System (GPS)



3.2.4 Tier 1 SWAT Teams also conducting these **advanced mission capabilities** may require additional corresponding specialized equipment:

- Tactical Operations in a Contaminated Environment
  - CBRNE (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Energetic) and Hazardous Material Detection Equipment
  - Level A, B and C Protective Ensembles
  - Level A, B and C Respiratory Protective Equipment
  - Decontamination Equipment
- Airborne Operations
  - Airship Mounted Shooting Platforms
  - Airship Mounted Rope Insertion Systems
  - Safety Harnesses
- Waterborne Operations
  - Personal Flotation Devices (PFD's)
  - Personal Swim Gear
  - Waterproof Containers
- High Angle or Elevated Entry/Rescue Operations
  - Rappelling Equipment
- No/Low Light Rescue Operations
  - Night Vision Goggles/Optics w/IR Illuminators
  - Thermal Imaging Devices

3.3 Law enforcement specialized tactical teams often deploy to high-risk, large-scale, and extended operations and under conditions that place hostages, bystanders, police officers, and suspects at increased risk for injury or illness. The risk profile calls for incorporating a medical element into all phases of these operations. In addition to rendering immediate medical care, properly trained medical



providers assigned to law enforcement teams are able to assist commanders with developing pre-deployment medical risk assessment, implementing risk-reduction strategies, providing logistic support, and serve as a liaison to coordinate medical operations with local emergency medical services (EMS).

- Specialized tactical teams should train and equip medical providers to deploy routinely with specialized tactical teams in a manner appropriate to the threat, the mission objectives, and in accordance with respective team protocols. TEMS elements should operate under protocols that permit the rapid access to casualties, the opportunity to provide medical countermeasures, and in a manner that directly supports tactical operations.
- TEMS providers should be involved in all aspects of law enforcement special operations. They should serve as consultants to law enforcement commanders on all stages of planning and operations in matters of mission planning, team health and safety, and serve as the liaison between law enforcement operations, EMS services, and other state and local health care services.
- Law enforcement agencies are encouraged to incorporate TEMS providers into non-operational roles such as training agency personnel in first-responder medical care, and managing health and safety matters such as maintaining team health and immunization records.
- The selection, training, and operational role of TEMS personnel should occur under written policies and procedures that include guidelines that establish clearly defined chains of operational and medical command, and scope of practice.
- TEMS providers should practice under the medical direction of a physician trained and experienced in tactical medical care. The duties of



the medical director should include the oversight of training, determining clinical competencies, authorizing the scope and competencies for medical procedures, and directing a quality assurance program.

- Law enforcement agencies should advocate for state and local EMS guidelines that define the scope of practice for Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics supporting law enforcement operations.
- Medical care providers supporting law enforcement operations should undergo TEMS specific didactic and skills training that provides for a working competency of medical best practices and tactics. Once trained, programs should validate ongoing provider competency through periodic retraining and skills reviews. Training should conform to established core competencies and be evidence-based. TEMS skills should include, but not be limited to, tactical theory and techniques, use of specialized medical equipment, tactical emergency casualty care (TECC), and casualty extraction.
- Medical providers expected to provide emergency care when operating in high-stress environments should be provided opportunities to remain highly proficient in their technical and clinical decision-making skills. Maintaining clinical proficiency requires that EMTs and paramedics supporting law enforcement operations continue have ongoing experience as field EMS providers.

3.4 Operational support functions may also include, but are not limited to, the following mission specific elements:

**Tactical Bomb Squad Support:** Bomb technicians to provide direct and general support to SWAT in high-risk incidents involving explosive



hazards. Refer to *Guide to Writing Standard Operating Procedures for Operations Involving the Combined Resources of Bomb Squads and SWAT Teams*. ([www.nbscab.org](http://www.nbscab.org))

**Hazardous Material (Haz Mat) Support Unit:** Haz Mat technicians to provide direct support in decontamination, hazard detection, air monitoring, etc.

**Tactical Canine Support:** Canine handlers that assist with perimeter control and high-risk search operations.

**Aviation Support (both manned and unmanned aircraft systems):** Fixed wing aircraft for surveillance, rotary aircraft for team insertion/rescue and aerial shooting platforms and Unmanned Aircraft Systems for surveillance and intelligence collection.



## 4.0 AGENCY POLICY GOVERNING SWAT TEAMS

- 4.1 Law enforcement agencies should develop and maintain written policies designed to meet the needs of their operational environment and consistent with this standard.
- 4.2 The policy topics listed below are not all inclusive, but do provide the minimum basis for the sound management of any tactical team. Team commanders are strongly encouraged to explore any and all topics that may need to be established through a specific policy.
  - 4.2.1 Policy that identifies team organization and function which includes an organizational diagram. Command relationships between the SWAT or TRT team, incident commander, Crisis Negotiation Team (CNT) and any other joint or support elements that ensure clear lines of responsibility and compliance with the protocols of the National Incident Management System and the Incident Command System. If applicable, Mutual Aid Agreements and/or governmental support requests shall be incorporated into this policy.
  - 4.2.2 Personnel management policy that addresses selection, retention, mandatory physical and tactical competency and other appropriate personnel management processes to include the development of protocols and processes for the selection of team members. This policy should also address appropriate behavior and acceptable language when interacting with the public. Such policies should also address minimum training and experience requirements for tactical leadership positions before they assume command.
  - 4.2.3 Policy that outlines training requirements as designated by tasks. Minimum time periods should be established to develop and maintain assigned critical skills.
    - 4.2.3.1 Team command should facilitate the development of appropriate annual training plans, lesson plans, schedules, and management protocols for the conduct of



training that are consistent with the NTOA TROS. This should include, but is not limited to, designation and delineation of critical skills and the required internal certification processes as well as development of minimum training hour requirements based on the critical skills identified and the team's unique operational tempo. The training program should include a documentation and verification process.

4.2.3.2 Training should incorporate current NTOA standards relating to safe conduct and the development of scenario-based exercises.

4.2.3.3 Based upon the mission competencies of a SWAT Tier 1 or Tier 2 team previously described in this standard, it would be difficult for most collateral-duty or full-time teams to maintain operational readiness without meeting the following training recommendations:

- New member initial training: Minimum 40-hour Basic SWAT course that introduces new operators to the fundamental skill sets required for most mission capabilities. Successful completion of an introductory course is not meant to be all encompassing and should not suggest that an operator is fully competent. Basic SWAT courses should be followed by a formal competencies-based field training program, supervised by a senior SWAT trainer.
- Monthly / Annually: 16-40 hours monthly and/or 192-480 hours annually of regular, reoccurring, and documented critical skills training that is dynamic and realistic. It is recommended that critical skills training be based upon mission capabilities and current operational requirements as identified by the individual agency.
- Specialty assignments: Critical skill training such as sniper, tactical emergency medical support, explosive breaching, etc. should be in addition to the above-listed hours, if cross trained as an entry team



operator. These additional training hours should be based upon the specialized assignment of the operator and any state requirements or certification process that is required of them,

- Annual: Training attended by all members to address consistency in tactics and procedures, that may consist of lecture, drills and exercises for a minimum of 40 hours. It is recommended that this block of training be scheduled in addition to the regular monthly/annual critical skills maintenance training, although in certain situations it can be blended together.
- The training program should require an operational risk assessment for all training activities.

4.2.4 Policy that explains the activation and deployment approval process of the team. Teams operating through an MOU, should include an automatic notification and activation system to ensure the appropriate resources are deployed for the significance of the event.

4.2.5 Policy that addresses the appropriation, care, maintenance and inventory of team equipment. It should also address normal life-cycle wear and removal of obsolete or faulty team equipment.

4.2.6 Policy that explains the design, activation and implementation of an appropriately staffed command post, which may include a Tactical Operations Center, Crisis Negotiation Center, Media Relations Center, etc.

4.2.7 The development of appropriate protocols and procedures for the conduct of long-term or extended operations. Protocols shall include, at a minimum, processes for relief and rotation of personnel and proper staffing and training of a supplemental incident command center.



- 4.2.8 Policy requiring a threat/risk assessment for team deployments, specifically for pre-planned events such as high-risk warrant service. The operational threat/risk assessment should include an appropriate medical response plan.
- 4.2.9 Policy requiring after-action reports (AARs) which capture tactical and incident debriefing information for training purposes. SWAT command should review all AARs, critiques, tactics and actions taken by all elements during the critical incident. Documentation should be retained in accordance with agency policy and state statute.
- 4.2.10 SWAT command should be capable of producing a written annual report, which should include a summary of all activations, nature of incident, resolution, injuries occurred, use of force and other critical information. Agencies should consider entering relevant data into the FBI Hostage Barricade System (HOBAS) database (<http://www.cjis.gov/>). Username and password are required.
- 4.3 Agency policies and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) should be reviewed and approved annually and any changes shall include a risk assessment based on, but not limited to, the following criteria;

**Case law review:** Implications of national and jurisdictional rulings and precedents on current training, operations and policy.

**Training updates:** Ensuring agency policy and SOP correspond with latest training received. Compliance with applicable law as well as an ongoing assessment of risk management processes.

**Operational practices:** Ensuring actual operational tactics are reflective of policy and a risk assessment of team assignments and tactical incident responses are consistent with the safety priorities model.

All prior versions of SOPs should be archived for historical and potential litigation purposes.



## 5.0 Crisis Negotiation Teams

- 5.1 A Crisis Negotiations Team (CNT) responds to high-risk, high-profile cases of hostage-taking, suicide where the means of suicide represents a risk to the public or public order, barricaded criminals, as part of a pre-planned operation for large-scale civil unrest where the actors are open to a negotiated surrender or when there is a likelihood for a barricade or hostage situation as in a high-risk warrant service. A capable CNT can develop actionable intelligence regarding any negotiations or tactical problem, provide a risk assessment, open lines of communication with a suspect, and use active listening and bargaining techniques to negotiate a surrender. At the heart of the CNT response to a crisis is a belief that time is a precious commodity. The CNT works to buy time for the calming of emotion, the development of the best tactical plan, the creation of rapport between negotiator and suspect, to serve as a distraction of the suspect during SWAT activity and the statistically best chance for a safe resolution.
- 5.2 A CNT should be composed of at least three negotiators. Every member of the team is a trained negotiator filling a specific assigned role in an incident. The Primary Negotiator communicates directly with the suspect(s). The Secondary Negotiator supports, critiques, and serves as a buffer for the primary. A CNT should also have a designated Team Leader that develops strategies for the negotiation, monitors the effectiveness of the Primary/Secondary pairing, manages intelligence production and coordinates with the tactical and command elements. Where possible, additional trained negotiators can be added to this basic structure to serve as intelligence officers, tactical liaisons, technical equipment officers and scribes. Optimally, a qualified mental health professional should be added to a team as the Mental Health Liaison, to serve as an advisor



on mental health issues, coordinate information gathering from health care providers, and monitor negotiator wellness.

5.3 Just as the SWAT component of any operation has their own Tactical Operations Center (TOC), so does the Crisis Negotiation Team. The Negotiations Operations Center (NOC) should be close to or collocated with, but not within the TOC, to allow both components to carry out their functions efficiently and without interference. A NOC can be a dedicated vehicle or temporary space within a structure if allowed by the circumstances. A dedicated communications system that provides a listening only option (headset, speakers) for the tactical commander is advisable.

5.4 As recommended by the National Council of Negotiations Associations ([www.ncna.us](http://www.ncna.us)), individuals selected to become negotiators should receive training which includes:

- A minimum of 40 hours in a qualified course
- Training should include basic concepts and techniques, abnormal psychology, assessment, crisis/suicide intervention, active listening skills, case studies, meaningful role-playing drills, and an incident management overview

As with all critical law enforcement skills, such as firearms, negotiators should periodically receive updated training and practice in order to maintain proficiency. It is recommended negotiators annually attend a minimum of 40 hours of training in order to stay proficient. Additionally, it is highly recommended that they attend regional or national conferences, learning from case study presentations, and conduct joint training with tactical teams.



5.5 Negotiations teams should at a minimum be equipped with reliable and diverse methods to communicate with suspects in a wide variety of environments and to record these communications. At a minimum:

- Throw phone capable of being introduced into a barricaded area
- Cellular device capable of voice, data, text, and video
- Public address system.
- An internet capable-device with the ability to run social media applications.

If negotiators are sworn law enforcement officers, they should be armed and equipped with industry standard ballistic armor. Those sworn negotiators should consider carrying intermediate weapons (Taser, baton, OC spray) as they will invariably interact with the emotional friends and families of barricaded subjects in the process of gathering intelligence. If sworn negotiators are tasked with negotiating from within threat areas (i.e. an armored rescue vehicle, from behind cover or while wearing an APR in a chemical agent environment), they should be trained and equipped appropriately to do so. Such training should include movement with tactical operators, familiarization with deployment vehicles and proper donning and use of relevant personal protective equipment.



## 6.0 Operational Planning

- 6.1 Appropriately trained and designated personnel should develop an operational plan in a consistent format for pre-planning purposes. The planning processes should include location scouting, development of detailed written operations orders, detailed operations order briefings, operation rehearsals and pre-mission inspections. Final approval for all operational planning documents should rest on the team commander or a designee.
- 6.2 All SWAT team members should be trained in and capable of demonstrating proficiency in operational planning concepts.
- 6.3 Documentation should be retained in accordance with agency policy and state statute.
- 6.4 All personnel shall have thorough knowledge of the “Deadly Force” or force continuum for their agency, State and Federal law.



## 7.0 MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL AND REGIONAL SWAT

### OPERATIONS

- 7.1 The SWAT team (refer to Section 2.0 Team Typing) should develop appropriate agreements, protocols and procedures for support relationships between and among neighboring teams. By establishing formal relationships with supporting teams, agencies will be better prepared to handle incidents which exceed the capabilities and resources of the primary jurisdictional team. Where SWAT teams have access to additional supporting elements, they may also establish internal Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and/or external Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), Memorandums of Agreement (MOAs) or Inter-Governmental Agreements (IGAs) in compliance with any local, state or federal law. At a minimum, these agreements shall clearly delineate, establish and specify law enforcement chain of command, operational control, duties and responsibilities of supporting units and joint training requirements. Agreements shall also specify which agency is charged with jurisdiction in the event of a criminal investigation involving the actions of a SWAT member, such as an officer-involved shooting.



## 8.0

## Glossary

Active killer	An armed suspect who is actively killing or attempting to kill civilians and/or law enforcement and continues to do so while having access to additional victims.
After-action report	A document to be completed following a debriefing or after-action review of a planned or spontaneous operation to include the actions taken (or failures to act and omissions) by personnel, mission results and any pertinent and relevant information related to same operation including lessons learned and any training recommendations identified. Documentation should be supported with the operational plan, related reports, and any other written or photographic material associated with the operation.
After-action review	A structured process for analyzing a particular operation or exercise and usually includes subject matter experts or superiors, not assigned to the team, specifically tasked with identifying areas for improvement.
Armored rescue vehicle	A vehicle that is or has been hardened to protect the occupants from small arms fire and fragmentation. Also known as an "ARV."
Arrest team	A team of operators established to contact, control and detain suspect(s). Primary function is to safely and effectively receive anyone exiting a location. May also serve as the Immediate Reaction Team or Emergency Reaction Team depending on personnel available.
Barricaded subject	A barricade situation may be defined as the standoff created by an armed or potentially armed suspect in any location, whether fortified or not, who is refusing to comply with lawful orders for surrender.
Breach and hold	A tactical technique by operators to maintain and hold their positions in close proximity of the entry point of a incident location after breaching that entry point. Also known as "breach and delay."
Brief back	The formal process after an operational briefing (or as part of that process) wherein an operator will recite back to the team leader or operational leader his/her specific assignment/s and tactical/equipment responsibilities for a pending operation.



Casualty collection point	Designated secure location for the collection of injured persons.
Chemical agents	Any liquid, solid, or gas compound that works psychologically and/or physiologically to create discomfort in humans.
CNT	Crisis Negotiation Team. Responsible for developing actionable intelligence regarding any negotiations/tactical problem, contribute to a risk assessment, open lines of communication with a suspect, and use active listening and bargaining techniques to negotiate a surrender.
Command and control	The exercise of authority and delegated by a properly designated commanding officer over law enforcement personnel in the accomplishment of the mission.
Compromise authority	Direct action authority granted by the Incident Command/Tactical Commander to a team leader authorizing the initiation of specific action and or series of actions in response to actions taken by the suspect(s).
Containment	Pre-designated perimeter positions of incident location(s) to control and contain suspect movements.
Contain and call out	A technique associated with a tactical element surrounding and establishing containment of an incident location before contact with occupants to facilitate a subsequent callout of those occupants in a controlled manner to a secured and safe area. Also known as "Surround and Call Out."
Diversion	A physical or psychological tactic used to draw a suspect away from the principal point of contact, used to draw attention away from the primary action.
Dynamic tactics	Tactics comprised of a group of techniques that are characterized by continuous productive activity and not specifically by the speed of movement.
Emergency entry/rescue	Making an emergency entry into a location with little or no intelligence when there is an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury to civilians or law enforcement personnel.
Entry	Any procedure to gain entrance to any tactical threat environment, such as structures, conveyances or property.



Explosive breaching	Use of explosives to breach entry/access points and porting. The precise application of measured amounts of explosive compounds in order to affect an opening.
Flash Sound Diversionary Device (FSDD)	A device creating a bright flash and loud report designed to temporarily divert the attention of persons in the immediate vicinity, giving tactical teams a window of opportunity to exploit to their advantage. May also be referred to as a Noise Flash Diversionary Device (NFDD).
Hard target weapon system	A weapon system, that due to its unique kinetic energy and terminal penetration qualities, is capable of defeating armored locations and/or vehicles that pose a threat to public safety.
High-risk apprehension	A search for or arrest of a suspect in any environment that is characterized by known or suspected hazards and risks to such a degree that the service of which exceeds the capabilities of the normal patrol and investigative functions.
High-risk warrant	A search or arrest warrant characterized by known or suspected hazards and risks to such a degree that the service of which exceeds the capabilities of the normal patrol and investigative functions.
Hostage	A person held by force or fear by a hostage taker who intends to harm the person or as security that specified terms or an ultimatum will be met.
Hostage rescue	Deployment of a tactical team in defense of life to save and rescue hostages.
Improvised Explosive Device (IED)	A homemade explosive device.
Immediate reaction team	A team prepared to respond to unplanned events at the crisis site. This team may also be tasked with Arrest Team responsibilities based upon personnel available.
Incident commander	The individual responsible for all incident activities, including the development of strategies and tactics and the ordering and the release of resources. The IC has overall authority and responsibility for conducting incident operations and is responsible for the management of all incident operations at the incident site.
Incident command	The field location at which the primary tactical-level, on-scene incident



post/ICP	command functions are performed.
Inner perimeter	A close proximity boundary maintained initially by first responding officers, later transferred to the tactical team and designed to contain the situation and suspect(s) to the smallest possible area and control access to the area of operation.
Knock & announce entry	Verbal notice, to include identity and purpose, required by law before entering a building during service of a search or arrest warrant.
Last Cover and Concealment (LCC)	A specific area in relation to the operational sight that provides the team or individuals from the team cover and concealment prior to being exposed to specific threats while on approach.
Limited penetration	A tactical maneuver where forward access by an entry team is limited to a measured and partial entry into an incident location rather than fully entering the location. Suspects and other occupants can be detained at the point of the entry and/or be called out from other places within the location to the area controlled by the entry team.
Linear takedowns	A planned approach to clear a linear-shaped confined space conveyance or elongated area such as a bus, train, subway, airplane or close-quarter hallways.
Limit of exploitation (LOE)	A separation of areas within the operational site where team members can advance to but not cross. Also known as Limit of Advancement (LOA).
MACTAC	Multi-Assault, Counter Terrorism Action Capabilities. Multiple deadly force incidents occurring simultaneously or concurrently; a terrorist attack involving explosives (IED), high-powered weapons; or a hostage siege where the armed persons have used deadly physical force or are preparing to use deadly force on other persons, and it is an ongoing dynamic incident.
Multi-casualty violence	An act or acts of violence resulting in multiple casualties when committed by a subject or subjects (active killer) by any means that may or may not be conventionally classified as a weapon.
No-knock entry	Any tactical operation in which law enforcement officers have been legally exempted from the usual requirements of knocking, identifying themselves and demanding entry. Circumstances and justifications must



	be documented.
Objectives	The desired result or final outcome of a tactical operation. Used to provide a focal point for directing the efforts to attain it without requiring excessive instructions or meticulous supervision.
Operator	A sworn law enforcement officer trained, equipped and assigned to a tactical law enforcement operations unit or team.
Operational plan	Any plan, written or unwritten, which seeks to achieve an acceptable resolution by allocating resources and affixing responsibility to members of the organization.
Performance standards	Levels of performance required for planning and carrying out missions or tasks, used to evaluate individual and team performance, serve as a guide for evaluating a training session and as a basis for debriefing an operation.
Personal protection detail	Perform duties associated with providing protection to dignitaries, VIP's, witnesses, or other protectees.
Port and cover	Breaching and/or removal of all obstructions/barriers within a window, door or wall and/or similar opening to allow operators to enter location, deploy FSDD and/or safely observe and cover a room's interior and any occupants from outside the location after porting.
Rapid deployment	The immediate deployment of law enforcement resources to life-threatening situations where the delay in such deployment could result in death and/or great bodily harm to persons.
Reactionary authority	Unless otherwise specified during a SWAT mission, SWAT officers should react to deadly threats according to their agency policy governing the use of force. Officers are cautioned that the use of the sound tactical judgement is to be utilized when reacting to deadly threats and the safety of innocent victims is paramount.
Reconnaissance	The systematic observation and documentation of the physical characteristics of an objective and the surrounding area.
Risk assessment	The process of evaluating and determining the presence of any or all potential hazards or dangerous conditions to law enforcement personnel and the public that may be present or may occur during an operation or training to determine the appropriate risk level of that pending action.



Ruse	A psychological tactic which is intended to distract or deceive someone to gain a tactical advantage.
Safety priorities	A decision-making process which provides the framework for making tactically sound decisions, utilizing objective criteria based on an individual's current or likely risk of suffering serious bodily injury or death and their direct ability to remove themselves from that danger. Those exposed to the greatest potential of injury with the least ability to escape the situation are placed at the top of the priorities, i.e. a hostage is at grave danger of injury when held against their will and has little ability to control their situation. On the other end of the continuum is the suspect, who has little threat of injury and absolute control over the situation. The safety priorities value all life and its sole intent is to assist law enforcement in making tactical decisions to assist in saving lives.
Slow and deliberate	Movement technique characterized by stealth and without regard for time.
SMEAC	Acronym used for operational planning: Situation, Mission, Execution, Administration/Logistics and Command/Signal.
Sniper	A highly-trained operator who's missions include intelligence gathering, observation and the capability of delivering precision fire with a rifle. Operator with long rifle capability; long rifle marksman.
Sniper-initiated takedown	The tactic of initiating a coordinated approach on a building or vehicle immediately after the sniper takes a dedicated pre-planned or spontaneous precision shot.
Standard Operating Procedures/SOPs	Established or prescribed methods followed routinely for the performance of designated operations or in designated situation in accordance with agency policy.
SWAT	Acronym for Special Weapons and Tactics team. A designated law enforcement team whose members are recruited, 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.
Tactical medic	A tactical medic is a licensed medical practitioner with specialized training and a demonstrated ability to work in and provide medical care within an



	active law enforcement operation.
Target-specific directed fire	Controlled gunfire that is directed at the suspect, reducing the suspect’s ability to return fire while a tactical team, element or individual movement is conducted. Also known as “suppressive fire,” “cover fire,” “return fire” and “weapons fire.”
Team commander	The designated individual(s) responsible for the management, operation and deployment of a tactical team.
Team leader	A team member, regardless of rank, with an appropriate level of experience and competence who works directly with team members. Acts in an administrative, tactical and operational capacity under the Team Commander to coordinate and supervise training, planning and deployment activities.
TEMS	The mission-preplanning, preventative care and medical treatment rendered during mission-driven, high-risk, large-scale, and extended law enforcement operations. The TEMS scope of practice includes medical interventions that further the health and safety of all law enforcement personnel and are intended to reduce the incidence of injury, illness, disability, and death associated with police operations. TEMS adapts and incorporates sound medical practices with police tactics for use in operations characterized by competing mission objectives, diagnostic uncertainty, limited resources, and performance decrement under stress to permit the delivery of effective medical care in an unfolding law enforcement mission. The needs and operating environment of the SWAT team determine the medical capabilities of the TEMS element.
Terrorism	The calculated use of violence or the threat of violence to create fear, intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious or ideological.
Tactical operations center (TOC)	The location that supports Tactical Command decision-making processes by analyzing, assessing and evaluating information on, and activities of, the suspect(s). In doing so, the TOC documents activities and processes of the Commander and Team Leader(s). The four primary activities of the TOC include operations, intelligence, negotiations liaison and sniper control.



## NTOA TROS 2018

Vehicle takedown	Perform duties associated with approaching an armed suspect contained within a stationary vehicle. Also known as "high-Risk vehicle takedown."
Warrant service	Performing or carrying out an arrest or search warrant on a location.
Window of opportunity	A set of favorable circumstances that offer an advantage during a tactical operation if appropriately exploited in a timely manner.



## 9.0

## SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

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For further sample documents, please refer to the [NTOA website's](#) File Sharing area which is available to members only.