

Special Response Unit (SRU)

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Policy Statement

The Sheriff's Office will maintain a Special Response Unit (SRU) comprised of two teams: a [Crisis Negotiations Team \(CNT\)](#) and a [Special Weapons and Tactics \(SWAT\)](#) Team. The SRU will provide specialized support to Sheriff's Office or other law enforcement agency personnel in handling critical field operations where intense negotiations and/or special tactical deployment methods beyond the capacity of field deputies/officers appear to be necessary.

Persons Affected

All law enforcement and corrections deputies.

Directives Affected

[Special Response Team Manual](#) – administrative sections covered by this policy are canceled.

Organization

SRU Commander

The sheriff will appoint a SRU commander upon recommendation of the Bureau of Law Enforcement and Investigative Services (BLEIS) chief. The SRU commander will report to a command staff member designated by the BLEIS chief.

The SRU commander is responsible for overall management of the unit including personnel, equipment and training. The SRU commander shall ensure that members' participation in SRU-related training is documented and that appropriate records are placed in each member's agency training file, and shall establish and maintain a separate agency SRU training file with documentation and records of all unit training.

The SRU commander normally serves as the tactical commander during SRU operations.

Team Leaders

The BLEIS chief, in consultation with the SRU commander, will appoint a Crisis Negotiation Team leader and a Special Weapons and Tactics Team leader. Team leaders will report to the SRU commander for matters concerning their teams.

Team leaders are responsible for directing team operations during deployments and training, as well as working with the SRU commander to manage their teams.

Annual Missions Review

The BLEIS chief should annually review SRU operations in a report to the Sheriff via the chain of command. The report should assess whether unit capabilities are aligned with the mission and needs of the Sheriff's Office and recommend changes necessary to close any gaps.

Annual Training Needs Assessment

The SRU commander shall annually assess and report to the BLEIS chief whether unit training is being conducted within team capabilities and Sheriff's Office policy.

Continuous Evaluation

The SRU commander and team leaders shall continually evaluate members' performance and efficiency as it relates to the positive operation of the unit. All unit members will maintain performance and efficiency levels as established by the team leaders. Any member who performs or functions at a level less than satisfactory may be subject to dismissal from the unit.

Command Training

All command personnel are encouraged to attend training for managing SRU functions at the organizational level to ensure personnel who provide active oversight at the scene of SRU operations understand the purpose and capabilities of the unit.

Deployment

Mobilization

See the Special Response Unit Mobilization [job aid](#).

Requests for Other Agency Resources

A command staff member must approve requests to use tactical teams or negotiators other than Sheriff's Office personnel during Sheriff's Office operations.

Requests from Other Agencies

A command staff member must authorize deployment of any Special Response Unit resources to assist other agencies.

A Sheriff's Office command staff member will command Sheriff's Office SWAT operations in all situations, including multi-agency operations.

Multi-Jurisdictional Operations

The SRU should develop protocols, agreements, memorandums of understanding, and/or working relationships to support multi-jurisdictional or regional responses. If it is anticipated that multi-jurisdictional SRU operations will regularly be conducted, multi-agency and multi-disciplinary joint training exercises are encouraged.

Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team

The SWAT Team is a designated team whose members are specifically trained and equipped to work in coordinated teams to resolve critical incidents that are so hazardous, complex, or unusual that they may exceed the capabilities of field or investigative units including, but not limited to incidents involving hostage taking, barricaded suspects, snipers, terrorist acts and other high-risk incidents. As a matter of policy, the SRU may also serve high-risk warrants, both search and arrest, where public and officer safety issues warrant its use.

Capabilities

The SWAT Team should develop sufficient resources to perform three basic operational functions:

- Command and Control.
- Containment.
- Entry/Apprehension/Rescue.

It is understood that 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.

Operations

The Sheriff's Office shall develop a separate written set of operational procedures governing SWAT Team operations in accordance with team capabilities and using sound risk reduction practices. The operational procedures should be patterned after the National Tactical Officers Association's [SWAT Standard](#). Because such procedures are specific to SWAT Team 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) Designation of personnel responsible for developing an operational or tactical plan prior to and/or during SWAT Team operations (time permitting). Plans should include medical emergency contingencies.
- (b) Plans for mission briefings conducted prior to an operation unless circumstances require immediate deployment.
- (c) Protocols for sustained operations including personnel rotation and relief, and resource augmentation.
- (d) A generic checklist to be used prior to initiating a tactical action as a means of conducting a threat assessment to determine the appropriate level of response.
- (e) The appropriate role of trained negotiators.

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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 considering all reasonably foreseeable alternatives in accordance with risk/benefit criteria prior to selecting the method of response.
- (h) Post-incident scene management guidelines including incident documentation, transition of responsibility to other units, and debriefings.
- (i) Sound risk management analysis.
- (j) Standardization of deployed equipment.

Uniforms, Weapons and Equipment

SWAT Team members shall wear uniforms that are agency-issued or approved and that clearly identify them as law enforcement officers, except in situations specifically authorized by the SRU commander when stealth is necessary and only during the time when it is authorized and necessary. This requirement is not intended to prevent any Sheriff's Office member from taking appropriate actions in emergency situations.

SWAT Team members shall only use weapons and equipment, including any modifications, additions, or attachments, issued by the Sheriff's Office or approved by the SRU commander. Minor modifications that do not change the functionality of a weapon (e.g., grips, slings) do not require approval.

Training

The SRU commander shall plan and coordinate team training with the SWAT Team leader.

Safety

The SRU commander and SWAT Team leader shall use a designated safety officer when any hazardous training is conducted (e.g., live fire, chemicals).

Initial Training

SWAT Team personnel shall not be deployed until successful completion of a Criminal Justice Training Commission-approved basic SWAT course or its equivalent. To avoid redundancy, previous training completed by members may satisfy this requirement when the hours and content meet or exceed Sheriff's Office requirements or standardized training recommendations.

The SRU commander shall attend a SWAT or tactical commander course or equivalent.

Ongoing Training

SWAT Team members will participate in scenario-based training that simulates the tactical operational environment. Such training is an established method of improving performance during an actual deployment. Periodic training exercises should also include a review and critique of personnel and their performance.

Minimum training requirements are detailed in the following sections.

Policy

Physical Fitness Test

Each SWAT Team member must take and pass a physical fitness test once each year.

The SWAT Team Leader will notify each member who does not pass of the requirement to retest and attain a qualifying score. Within 90 days of the previous physical fitness test date, the member required to qualify shall report to the SWAT Team leader or their designee and complete the entire physical fitness test. Failure to qualify after a second attempt may result in dismissal from the team.

Members who are on vacation, ill, or on light duty status with a doctor's note of approval on the test date shall be responsible for reporting to the SWAT Team leader or their designee and taking the test within 90 days of their return to regular duty. Any member who fails to arrange for and perform the physical fitness test within this 90 day period shall be considered as having failed to attain a qualifying score for that test period.

Handgun and Rifle Qualification

Each SWAT Team member shall perform the mandatory handgun qualification course once every quarter. Failure to qualify will require that member to seek remedial training from a range instructor approved by the SRU commander. Team members who fail to qualify with a minimum score of 90 percent or better must retest within 60 days. Failure to qualify within 60 days, with or without remedial training, may result in dismissal from the team.

Crisis Negotiations Team (CNT)

The Crisis Negotiation Team is 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.

Operations

The Sheriff's Office shall develop separate written operational procedures governing CNT operations in accordance with team capabilities when necessary.

Training

The SRU commander shall plan and coordinate team training with the CNT Team leader.

Initial Training

Deputies selected as members of the CNT should attend a basic negotiators course approved by the Criminal Justice Training Commission prior to assignment as the primary negotiator in an actual crisis situation. Untrained team members may be used in a support or training capacity.

Ongoing Training

Team members will participate in a minimum of one training day per quarter. Training should provide the opportunity for role playing and situational training necessary to maintain proper skills.

Uniforms and Equipment

CNT members should wear uniforms that clearly identify them as law enforcement officers.

Each CNT member shall have body armor available for wear at every incident to which he or she responds.