

# Force Option – Explosive Breaching

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## **Policy Statement**

The use of tactical explosives to gain near-instantaneous entry into a building can help ensure the safety of Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team members. By using this technique at a location that is known or suspected to be hostile to law enforcement, the team can greatly limit their time at the entry point where they are most vulnerable while disorienting any suspects, providing them time to take suspects safely into custody.

## **Persons Affected**

Authorized SWAT Team members.

## **Definitions**

**Explosive breaching** – The forced opening of closed, locked or otherwise secure doors or points of entry into a structure by the use of specially formed explosive charges.

## **Force Response Policy Compliance**

All responses with the force option covered in this policy must comply with the Sheriff's Office's Use of Force policy.

## **Authorization**

Designated SWAT Team members may use explosive breaching when, in the course of their duties, they must gain entry into a building or other structure, whether fortified or not, in which it is known or reasonably suspected that suspects inside are hostile to law enforcement, and when doing so would increase the safety of the entering team or the community.

## **Deployment Considerations**

In addition to the factors contained in the Use of Force policy, deputies should consider the following when determining whether or not to respond with, or modify their use of, explosive breaching in each situation:

- The presence of pregnant women, children or elderly persons in or near the building.
- The presence of flammable or explosive materials near the proposed detonation point (e.g., gasoline cans, natural gas lines).

## **Personnel and Training**

Designated members of the SWAT may conduct explosive breaching only after they:

- Successfully complete a Sheriff's Office-approved explosive entry course designed for law enforcement personnel.
- Possess a valid Washington State blaster's license in accordance with [WAC 296-52-64005](#).

Explosive breachers should attend formal training every other year.

Breachers should regularly train by practicing tasks as those tasks would be performed during actual SWAT deployments. These tasks include but are not limited to charge construction, net explosive weight calculations, breacher's briefings, target analysis, team movement and placement, and live charge evolutions.

## **Equipment, Devices and Materials**

### **Construction and Use**

Explosive breachers shall construct charges and use materials and devices in manners consistent with industry-standard training they attend and all applicable laws (e.g., [RCW 70.74](#), [Chapter 296-52 WAC](#)).

### **Maintenance and Storage**

Explosive breachers are responsible for ensuring that all explosive materials they require to conduct their missions are properly maintained and stored in Sheriff's Office-approved magazines that meet requirements set by the [Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives](#) and the [Washington State Department of Labor and Industries](#).

### **Documentation**

#### **Logs**

Breachers will maintain the following logs and update them as soon as possible when explosives are added, assigned, expended or removed.

#### ***Master Explosives Log***

This log lists all explosives held by explosive breachers (including the contents of all magazines).

#### ***Blasting Cap Log***

This log accounts for all electric, non-electric and shock tube caps.

#### ***Explosive Material Log***

This log accounts for all types of explosives other than blasting caps including detonating cord, sheet explosives, slip-on boosters and time fuses.

## Policy

### **Breacher's Report**

Breachers will fill out a report in an approved format each time they construct and use an explosive charge, whether operationally or in training, and submit it to the Special Response Unit (SRU) commander. The **SRU commander** will keep breacher's reports on file for a minimum of three years.

### **Accountability**

The **SRU commander** shall verify the accuracy of all logs at least every six months by personally comparing the logs to the contents of agency magazines.