

Germantown Police Department

Policies and Procedures

Number: 1-18
Effective Date: January 1, 2003
Subject: Special Weapons and Tactics Team
Previous Revisions:

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures and responsibilities pertaining to the operation of the Special Weapons and Tactics Team (SWAT).

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Germantown Police Department to have and maintain a specially trained tactical response unit. The tactical component is an effective tool in law enforcement. The designation and function of the SWAT team shall be based upon the task of the mission and modern police operation tactics. The SWAT Team shall provide resources and specialized expertise in resolving critical situations. The SWAT team shall be deployed and operate in accordance with the Department's deployment plan that governs tactical operations.

III. PROCEDURE

A. Command and Control:

The SWAT team shall be under the overall command of the Deputy Chief of Police. The SWAT team shall be under the tactical command of the SWAT team Commander. The SWAT team shall be composed of sworn Germantown officers.

B. Mission:

The SWAT team is a support component of the Uniform Patrol Division. The Special Weapons and Tactics Team is a specially trained team designed to effectively handle a wide variety of emergency and non-emergency situations, which are beyond the normal capabilities of the patrol officer. These include hostage rescue missions, resolving barricaded subject situations, service of warrants, dignitary protection, directed patrols and other missions which require a high degree of skill and teamwork.

C. Unit Structure and Description:

The Chief of Police establishes the basic unit structure and strength. Unit strength may change as a result of reassignment, attrition and resignation. The unit may be restructured only through administrative orders from the Chief of Police.

D. Structure of the SWAT team:

The SWAT team will be composed of officers of the rank of Senior Police Officer or higher. These officers will be appointed as probationary members of the unit. During the one year probationary period, new members will undergo training and evaluation by the unit commander. Appointment to the unit is an ancillary duty and does not provide any enhancement in rank.

E. Requirements and Selection Guidelines:

The SWAT team Commander will post any openings for personnel in the SWAT team. Any Senior Police Officer desiring to apply for the position shall submit a memo to the team Commander requesting consideration for the position. Applicants will then undergo a psychological exam, physical agility test, firearms qualification and oral interview. Current members of the Unit and the Command Staff will then review successful candidates' work histories. Final appointment authority will be at the discretion of the Chief of Police. The Chief of Police shall also have the authority to rescind a team appointment without grievance or prejudice.

F. Recurring Requirements:

1. Overall standard or higher rating on performance evaluations.
2. No letters of reprimand or other significant disciplinary action.
3. No habitual patterns of sick leave abuse or job performance difficulties.
4. Successful completion of entry-level fitness requirements annually.
5. Score of 93.3% (expert) with all assigned firearms.

G. Removal from SWAT team:

1. A member will be suspended from the Team if he/she fails to meet the above recurring requirements for a period of time to be determined by the Commander. If the member fails to meet the recurring requirements at the conclusion of the suspension time, he/she will be subject to removal from the team.

2. A member may be removed from the team at the discretion of the SWAT team Commander.
3. The member will be notified in writing of his/her removal, the circumstances that precipitated the removal and the process for appeal or reinstatement, if applicable.

H. Reinstatement of Members:

1. If a member is suspended from the team under the conditions listed above or any other reason, he/she may be reinstated at the end of the period of suspension.
2. A member who has left the team due to change in assignment may be placed on the reinstatement list upon transfer to an assignment, which does not conflict with SWAT team membership. To be eligible for reinstatement, the individual must meet all of the requirements of a new SWAT applicant.

I. Use of Force:

During any critical incident that requires the response of specially trained tactical personnel and a need for the authorization for the use of force exists, not excluding the use of chemical agents or distraction devices, this authorization shall derive from competent supervisory level authority. The on-scene Commander shall direct whatever force necessary to resolve the incident. This does not preclude an immediate need for use of force to protect an officer or citizen.

J. Mutual Aid:

When the request is made for assistance by an outside agency, the Chief of Police must approve the assistance to be provided by the SWAT team.

K. Training:

1. The team shall train at least one day per month. As part of the monthly training requirement, Team members will qualify as an expert with all assigned weapons. The SWAT team Commander will be responsible for scheduling and designing the monthly training sessions. All training sessions will be documented with a synopsis of the training plan and firearms scores.
2. Team members are expected to maintain above average levels of fitness. Team members must successfully pass the entry-level fitness requirements annually.

L. Equipment:

1. Team members will be issued personal safety equipment to include ballistic vests, Kevlar helmets, nomex gloves and nomex hoods. The team will also have at its disposal specialty equipment such as body bunker shield, rams, diversion devices, etc.

It shall be the duty of the SWAT team Commander to ensure that team personnel are fully trained in the use of all tactical equipment.

2. Each member shall be responsible for overseeing and providing the care and maintenance of personal assigned equipment as well as unit equipment. Failure to do so may result in suspension or termination from the unit.

M. Uniforms:

The Chief of Police shall designate the prescribed uniform for the SWAT team. A description of the uniforms shall be filed with the Administrative Captain.

N. Ordnance:

1. Unit ordnance shall be cleaned and maintained for readiness at all times.
2. A member(s) of the unit will be assigned the responsibility of overseeing the units' ordnance.
3. Upon the completion of training or activation of the Unit, where equipment is taken from the armory, it will be returned upon completion of the operation.

O. Ballistic Armor:

All SWAT team personnel will wear, at a minimum, the ballistic vest assigned to the individual during all critical incidents. Additional ballistic equipment should be utilized when applicable to the event, provided the equipment does not hamper or in itself create a safety problem (ballistic helmet/shield, etc.).

P. Extraordinary or Critical Events:

The first officer who arrives at the scene of an extraordinary hazard event will have the following duties:

1. Take immediate action necessary to protect victims, bystanders or the public in general.

2. Attempt to contain or isolate the suspect in a confined area.
3. Direct responding units to positions of safety. Inform the supervisor of the situation.

The first supervisor on the scene shall take the following actions:

- a. Assume command of the event and make an assessment of the seriousness of the situation. If the supervisor feels that he/she cannot handle the event with on-duty personnel, he/she will contact his/her supervisor and request additional personnel.
- b. Once the supervisor requests additional manpower, he/she will establish an outer perimeter and designate a command post in a safe area.
- c. Coordinate the orderly evacuation of innocent persons from the areas of danger. Persons evacuated shall be detained in a secure area for debriefing regarding the event. This debriefing area also must be secure from the press.
- d. The on-scene supervisor will establish an action plan for responding units, ensuring that responding personnel are given an immediate assignment.

The SWAT team Commander shall take the following actions:

- a. Establish a secure inner perimeter around the event.
- b. Assess and evaluate the event and plan a course of action.
- c. Develop a contingency plan that anticipates a peaceful surrender or an attempt to flee by the suspect(s).
- d. Coordinate and direct all police activities within the inner perimeter.

The Investigative Division Commander shall take the following actions:

- a. Coordinate the gathering of intelligence about the event, including the suspect, victim and debriefing any evacuees.
- b. Ensure that the media is properly debriefed as necessary.
- c. Coordinate and supervise any negotiations with a barricaded suspect or hostage taker.

- d. Consult and advise the SWAT Team on the intelligence gathered and the progress of any negotiations.
- e. Coordinate and investigate all investigations during and at the conclusion of the event.

IV. CONTAINMENT TEAM

The department may establish a containment team composed of officers of the rank of Senior Police Officer. This team will be a support element of the SWAT team and will be under the command of the SWAT team Commander. These officers will be appointed as probationary members of this element for one year. During the one year probationary period, members will undergo training and evaluation by the SWAT team Commander. Appointment to this element of the SWAT team is considered an ancillary duty and does not provide any enhancement in rank.

- A. Requirements and Selection Guidelines:
The selection guidelines and requirements will be the same for members of this element as outlined in Section III of this policy, with the exception of the physical fitness and firearms proficiency requirement. The minimum physical fitness standard will be below the established entry-level SWAT team standard. The minimum firearms qualification standard will be 85% (marksman).
- B. Recurring Requirements:
Recurring requirements will be the same as outlined in Section III (F) of this policy, with the exception of the physical fitness and firearms proficiency requirement (refer to A above).

V. REVIEW PROCESS

An annual review of this policy will be conducted to determine if it should be revised, cancelled or continued in its present form.

This order shall remain in effect until revoked or superseded by competent authority.