

# Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT)

## 342.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Orange County Sheriff's Department Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team was established to provide specialized support in the handling of critical incidents that may potentially exceed the scope and tactical capabilities of patrol personnel or investigative units.

These missions include but are not limited to hostage situations, barricaded suspects, sniper activities, high-risk search/arrest warrants, weapons of mass destruction (WMD), terrorist events, and other hazardous incidents.

## 342.2 MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of SWAT is to preserve and protect the lives of the people of Orange County. We stand ready to manage high-risk situations by providing effective and professional tactical support through superior training, tactics, and equipment, in order to safely resolve any event in which conventional law enforcement response has proven ineffective. We serve the people of Orange County through our unwavering commitment, maintaining our tradition of professionalism and tactical excellence.

## 342.3 SWAT USE OF FORCE POLICY

All Deputies assigned to SWAT will adhere to the Orange County Sheriff's Department Use of Force Policy, Policy 300.

## 342.4 SWAT TEAM ACTIVATION AND SUPPORT

### 342.4.1 TACTICAL SUPPORT ELEMENT (TSE) ACTIVATION

Any Deputy, Sergeant, or Supervisor managing a critical, ongoing incident, may request a Tactical Support Element (TSE), per POM Section 73, for consultation regarding the appropriateness of a SWAT activation or tactical advice and support. A tactical response may involve SWAT, Tactical Apprehension Team (TAT), the Crisis Negotiation Team (CNT), Hazardous Devices Squad (HDS), or a combination of any of the four. Requests must be made through the Emergency Communication Bureau Department Commander, who will then contact the Bureau Commander of the Special Enforcement Bureau, or their designee, to authorize tactical support.

### 342.4.2 SWAT TEAM ACTIVATION

If a tactical response is deemed appropriate, the SWAT Commander, or their designee, will notify the Department Commander that the SWAT team will be activated and respond. The number of operators and resources deployed will be at the discretion of the SWAT Sergeants and Team Leaders.

The following are some of the high-risk elements that may often necessitate a SWAT team response:

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1. Barricaded suspect(s) who are armed or believed to be armed
2. Hostage situation
3. High risk searches / arrest warrants which may involve the following:
  - (a) Subjects with a violent criminal history
  - (b) Documented gang members or known gang environments
  - (c) Subject(s) wanted for violent crimes
  - (d) Suspect(s) known to carry a firearm or have previous weapon convictions
4. Armed suspect(s)
  - (a) Presence of firearms at the location
  - (b) Discharge of a firearm
5. Sniper activity
6. Dignitary protection
7. Active Shooter events
8. Violent civil unrest / Mobile Field Force support
9. Any violent or potentially violent situation, that may exceed the scope and tactical capabilities of patrol personnel or investigative units, where SWAT personnel could enhance the ability to preserve life, maintain social order, and ensure the protection of life and property.

### 342.4.3 WARRANT SERVICE REQUEST

Units tasked with the service of a high-risk warrant on a residence or structure are encouraged to utilize the SWAT Warrant Matrix (Investigative Warrant Threat Assessment) to determine the appropriate level of tactical response, which may include the use of SWAT (See POM Section 73.II.4.a. SWAT Matrix) or the Tactical Apprehension Team (TAT). Any SWAT Warrant Matrix (Investigative Warrant Threat Assessment Worksheet) with a "yes" box checked shall be submitted to the SWAT Commander, or their designee, for review. The SWAT Commander, or their designee, will make the final determination if SWAT or TAT will serve the search warrant.

If deemed appropriate, the case will be assigned to a SWAT Team Leader, who will work directly with the case agent for details and coordination of the warrant service. Once service of the warrant has concluded, an element of SWAT personnel will maintain their presence at the scene until properly relieved by a Sergeant, Investigator, Deputy or other appropriate member of law enforcement.

### 342.4.4 OUTSIDE AGENCY REQUESTS

All outside agency requests for SWAT assistance will be directed to the SWAT Commander for review and final approval.

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### **342.5 OPERATIONAL AFTER-ACTION REPORTS**

A SWAT Supervisor or their designee will compose a detailed After-Action Report (AAR) to document all SWAT deployments and forward it to the appropriate case agent and SWAT Commander. This AAR will include the following:

1. General description of the incident
2. Incident DR number
3. Actions taken by SWAT
4. Use of Light Sound Diversionary Devices (LSDD)
5. Use of Chemical Irritants
6. Damage to structure or surrounding structures
7. Injuries to anyone on scene

### **342.6 SWAT TEAM MEMBER SELECTION**

SWAT selection announcements will be emailed department-wide at least thirty (30) days prior to the selection commencement date. Sworn personnel who have passed their probationary period (or will have by the time of selection) shall submit a SWAT Selection Application to their Division Captain for approval before applying. Qualified applicants will be provided a study packet along with the scheduled date, time, and location of the SWAT evaluation.

### **342.7 SWAT PROBATIONARY MEMBERS**

SWAT probationary members will be subject to a two-year observation period. SWAT probationary members will be assigned to a SWAT Training Officer and will receive a written evaluation (SWAT Observation and Assessment Report - SOAR) for every month of SWAT training completed for the first six months. SOAR reports may continue after the first six-month training period at the discretion of the training officer.

Throughout the two-year probationary period, training officers will review the SOAR reports with their trainees each month. Areas in need of remediation will be clearly documented, identified, and successfully addressed within one month. A failure to successfully remediate a deficiency will result in dismissal from the SWAT program.

### **342.8 INITIAL TRAINING**

SWAT team personnel should not be deployed in a live tactical role until successful completion of the POST-certified Basic SWAT Course. SWAT members undergoing their two-year probationary period may be utilized for various support tasks.

#### **342.8.1 RECURRING TRAINING**

SWAT Sergeants shall ensure the team's training is in accordance with Department Policy and within the training guidelines established by POST (11 CCR § 1084).

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SWAT Team Operators, Supervisors, and Team Leaders should complete, update or attend refresher training certified by POST, or its equivalent, every 24 months.

The following specialty units require additional training days each year to meet the minimum training requirements and ensure proficiency during high-risk operations:

- (a) Firearms Instructor / Range Master
- (b) Sniper Operations
- (c) Aerial Platform Operations
- (d) Joint Hazardous Assessment Team (JHAT)
- (e) Waterborne Operations
- (f) Weapons Armorer
- (g) Emergency Medical Care
- (h) CQC Tactics Training
- (i) Manual / Explosive Breaching
- (j) Chemical Agent Deployment

#### **342.8.2 SWAT TRAINING DOCUMENTATION**

Team training files will be maintained in accordance with the Department's Records Retention and Disposition Schedules and shall include the type of training, date(s) of attendance, personnel in attendance and a synopsis of the training conducted.

Any external training received by individual team members will be documented in the appropriate team member's file. It is the responsibility of each individual to ensure training certificates are provided to the appropriate team Sergeant for documentation.

#### **342.9 SWAT TEAM MEMBER EVALUATION AND DISMISSAL**

Continual evaluation of a team member's performance and efficiency shall be conducted by the SWAT team Sergeants and Commander.

SWAT Team members may be terminated from the team, with cause, in accordance with the Public Safety Officers Procedural Bill of Rights Act. Some causes suitable for dismissal may include, but are not limited to:

- 1. Violation of State or Federal Law
- 2. Violation of Department Policy, including:
  - (a) Unsafe weapons handling
  - (b) Egregious tactical or other safety violations
- 3. Conduct unbecoming a Law Enforcement Officer
- 4. Integrity violations
- 5. Failure to correct deficiencies within one month of the identified deficiency

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- (a) Failure to qualify with assigned weapons
- (b) Failure to complete required training

An operator identified as performing unsatisfactorily in their role within SWAT will be given a written warning by a SWAT Sergeant. The deficient operator will be placed on a six-month probationary period and will be expected to remedy any deficiencies. If the deficiency is so serious that dismissal is immediately required, a detailed summary of the deficiency will be documented and approved by a SWAT Sergeant and/or the SWAT Sergeant will document the incident themselves.

The assigned SWAT Sergeant will receive a copy of all written warnings and subsequent evaluations. The Sergeant will forward all documentation regarding an operator being placed on probation or dismissal to the SWAT Commander for review and approval.

### 342.9.1 ANNUAL PHYSICAL FITNESS DIAGNOSTIC

Each SWAT team member shall participate in a bi-annual fitness diagnostic.

## **342.10 STANDARDIZATION OF EQUIPMENT**

### 342.10.1 UNIFORMS AND GEAR

SWAT operators will deploy in issued green tactical uniforms (with Sheriff's Department patches affixed to both shoulders and an embroidered Sheriff Badge on the chest), black boots, green tactical plate carrier with Level III ballistic plates, IFAK (individual first aid kit), gas mask (with compatible CBRN filter), and a ballistic helmet with built-in hearing protection unless they are responding from their primary assignment, and it is not practical to change uniforms.

### 342.10.2 WEAPONS SYSTEMS

Weapons used by SWAT shall be agency-issued or approved by a SWAT Armorer if owned by the individual operator. This includes any modifications, additions, or attachments to the weapon system. All weapons utilized by SWAT will be inspected by a SWAT Armorer once a year. Individual operators are expected to maintain clean and operable weapons systems at all times and should report any identified issues or concerns to the SWAT Armorer immediately.