

# WEST PALM BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT

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## IV-25 SPECIAL WEAPONS AND TACTICS (SWAT) TEAM FUNCTION

**EFFECTIVE: 01/01/2005**

CALEA Standards: 33.6.2, 46.1.4, 46.2.1, 46.2.2, 46.2.3, 46.2.5

CFA Standards: 21.01, 21.02, 21.04

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**I. POLICY:** The SWAT Team will provide a ready response to situations which require the use of special weapons or tactics beyond the capabilities of the normally equipped and trained law enforcement agency personnel. Specially trained and equipped members of the SWAT Team will be available 24 hours a day to handle certain high risk situations.

### **II. DEFINITION:**

A. SWAT - An acronym for Special Weapons and Tactics. A SWAT Team usually refers to a group of members who have had special marksmanship training, defensive tactics training and who are equipped with shotguns, sniping rifles, automatic weapons, climbing gear, or other specialized equipment useful in dealing with snipers, barricaded persons, or hostage-takers.

B. SWAT Medic - A certified firefighter/paramedic (Firemedic), employed full-time by the City of West Palm Beach Fire Department, selected and trained using the same criteria as a Police Department member of the SWAT team. SWAT Medics are required to complete the Auxiliary Officer Academy and are registered with the State as Auxiliary Officers with all the authority, duties and responsibilities attached thereto. While engaged in SWAT activities and operations, SWAT Medics have the same authority, responsibility, and are required to comply with all Police Department Policies and Procedures. They have no authority to perform any law enforcement function or duty except when functioning as part of the SWAT Team.

C. Team Leader - A supervisor specially trained in the use of weapons and tactics who is responsible for the coordination of, deployment, and tactical operations involving members directly under his or her command. The Team Leader will be responsible for making tactical decisions with regard to selecting routes of advance, points of entry into buildings or structures, and/or for directing target acquisition.

D. Assistant Team Leader - A supervisor assigned to Team Leader and will assume team control in the absence of the Team Leader.

E. Team Member - A member trained in the use of special weapons and tactics who is utilized in various capacities which include, but are not limited to, criminal activities dealing with hostage situations, barricaded suspects, or sniper activity.

F. SWAT Liaison Officer (SLO) - A certified Bomb Technician with additional training and certified in the construction, placement and initiation of an explosive breaching charge. The SLO functions are described in SOP IV-19.

### **III. SWAT TEAM FUNCTION AND DUTY:**

A. The administration, supervision and control of the SWAT Team will be the responsibility of the SWAT Team Commander. An officer of the rank of Lieutenant or higher will be designated as the SWAT Commander.

1. The Chief of Police or designee will determine the level of force necessary to bring the situation to a conclusion. (Use of Force)

B. Duties of the SWAT Team will include the following:

1. Perimeter security,
2. Building entry and suspect apprehension,
3. Crisis situations and hostage rescue operations, and
4. Execution of search warrants,
5. Dignitary Protection,

6. Witness Protection,

**IV. PROCEDURE:**

A. When the situation indicates SWAT is needed, the on-duty Shift Commander will request authorization to call out SWAT from the District Commander. Once authorization is received, the Shift Commander will then notify the SWAT Team Commander.

**1. SECTION DELETED AS IT SHOWS DEPLOYMENT**

B. After reviewing all known facts, the SWAT Commander or a designee will determine if the circumstances warrant deployment of the SWAT Team.

1. If deployment is necessary, Dispatch Operations will notify all appropriate SWAT, command and supervisory personnel.

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**C. SECTION DELETED AS IT SHOWS DEPLOYMENT**

D. The following tactical outline and containment responsibilities are intended to aid our efforts to successfully resolve such situations:

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E. The following will outline the containment responsibility utilized in SWAT situations:

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**F. SECTION DELETED AS IT SHOWS DEPLOYMENT**

G. A staging area for the news media will be established in a safe location. The Public Information Officer (PIO) or a designee will release only information which is approved for release by the SWAT Commander or Command Staff Officers who are present.

**V. TEAM TRAINING:**

A. All members of the SWAT Team must obtain in-service and mandatory retraining necessary to maintain certification as a Police Officer.

1. SWAT Medics may utilize equivalent training (such as CPR certifications, etc.) received in the course of their duties as Fire Fighter/Paramedics to meet mandatory retraining requirements.

2. SWAT Medics will attend all Police Department mandatory in-service training necessary for maintenance of certification as Auxiliary Police Officers. They may attend any scheduled in-service training course offered on their own time or with the approval of the Fire Department staff.

B. Members of the SWAT Team will receive technical training in the areas of special weapons and tactics.

C. Ongoing training will be conducted a minimum of **SECTION DELETED AS IT SHOWS DEPLOYMENT** each month. The location and curriculum will vary for each training session and can include readiness training with other special teams or agencies. Instructors will be selected in accordance with training needs.

D. Training to maintain physical fitness is the responsibility of each team member in conjunction with the standards established by the SWAT Commander. Areas of fitness include endurance, strength, and agility.

E. Team members will take part in semi-annual physical fitness tests to ensure that personal levels of fitness are maintained.

F. Members of the team will be barred from the team if unable to meet physical standards.

G. The responsibility for training and/or the selection of subject matter may be delegated by the SWAT Commander or SWAT Training Coordinator to senior SWAT Team members proficient in formal and/or advanced special weapons and tactics situations.

1. The designated senior SWAT Team members will oversee training and/or certification requirements in the use of all necessary equipment used in various SWAT call-out situations.

2. The designated senior SWAT Team members will be charged with maintaining all training records (i.e., physical fitness, firearm, etc.), and performance records.

H. Immediately following all incidents involving the use of the SWAT Team, except for routine training operations, the SWAT Team will **SECTION DELETED AS IT SHOWS DEPLOYMENT** and conduct a debriefing to critique the operational use of the SWAT Team and elicit any suggestions for the correction of operational errors and/or procedural deficiencies, if any. The SWAT Team Commander or a designated Team Leader will prepare and submit a supplemental report to the original case report.

1. Any members involved in the apprehension of a suspect(s) will prepare and submit a detailed supplemental report to the SWAT Commander or the designated Team Leader.

2. The SWAT Activity Report can act as the supplemental report, at the direction of the SWAT Commander, for incidents involving minimal SWAT response, such as routine warrant service.

**VI. PHYSICAL FITNESS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL TEST:**

A. Each member may be subject to a psychological evaluation on an as needed basis, at the discretion of the SWAT Commander.

B. Physical fitness testing will be designed to evaluate members' agility, flexibility, endurance, and upper body strength.

C. All testing information will be maintained by a team member designated by the SWAT Team Commander.

**VII. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION:**

A. Officers and Firemedics will be notified of vacancies on the SWAT Team by the posting of notices and publication of announcements in the Department newsletter. Individuals requesting assignment to SWAT will submit an application and/or resume to the Staff Services Division.

1. Firemedic applicants will submit a Police Department Supplementary Application for Police Officer with their application.

2. Firemedic applicants that have no equivalent in the selection process for Fire Fighter/Paramedic must complete the following components of the selection process for Police Officer:

- a. Background investigation
- b. Truth verification test (CVSA).

B. The selection process will follow the current Assignment to Specialized Positions/ Components procedure.

C. Applicants will be required to participate in a SWAT tryout consisting of exercises which are pertinent to the position. Applicants who pass the SWAT tryout will have their applications reviewed by the SWAT Commander and the Team Leaders.

D. An oral interview will be conducted by an interview board consisting of current SWAT Team members. Candidates who pass the SWAT tryout and the oral review will be placed on an eligibility list for SWAT Team appointment.

E. Members selected to the SWAT Team will serve on a voluntary basis, and are subject to call-out 24 hours a day, seven (7) days a week.

**VIII. SWAT TEAM EQUIPMENT, ISSUED:**

A. Due to the specialized nature of tactical operations, it is necessary for the Department to provide SWAT Team members with specialized equipment.

1. The type of specialized equipment issued to the SWAT team will be determined by the SWAT Commander.

**2. SECTION DELETED AS IT SHOWS DEPLOYMENT**

B. The SWAT Team Van is assigned to the SWAT Team through the Field Operations Bureau.

C. SWAT equipment not issued to the member will be maintained in the SWAT Locker at the Police Department.

1. In the event of a SWAT call out, **SECTION DELETED AS IT SHOWS DEPLOYMENT**

D. Equipment which is designated for use in unusual occurrence situations will be inspected monthly for operational readiness. Any equipment deemed inoperable will be removed from use and a supervisor will be notified.

**IX. MOCK EXERCISES:**

A. The SWAT Team and Hostage Negotiation Team members will conduct mock exercises on an as needed basis to ensure operational readiness when responding to incidents of hostage takers, armed suspects, sniper attacks, or other crisis type situations.

1. The SWAT Commander and Chief Hostage Negotiator will keep a copy of the operational assessment on file and review it for training needs.

**X. REFERENCE:**

- SOP # I-6 Recruitment and Selection
- SOP # I-8 Assignments to Specialized Position /Components.
- SOP # II-13 Public Information Officer.
- SOP # III-13 Use of Force.
- SOP # IV-17 Dignitary Protection.
- SOP # IV-26 Hostage Negotiation Function.

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**Delsa R. Bush, Chief of Police**

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Job Title Task Files: Dispatch Operations, PIO, Chief Hostage Negotiator, Shift Commander, SWAT Commander