

# WEST PALM BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT

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## IV-26 HOSTAGE NEGOTIATION TEAM

**EFFECTIVE: 01/01/2005**

CALEA Standards: 46.1.4, 46.2.1, 46.2.4,

CFA Standards: 21.01, 21.03, 21.04

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**I. POLICY:** The West Palm Beach Police Department has established guidelines for the operation and responsibility of hostage negotiators involved in incidents which may pose imminent danger to human life. Hostage Negotiators will respond to situations where a suspect(s) is believed to be barricaded or holding hostages and may reasonably be expected to possess deadly weapons which could be used against law enforcement officers, hostages or any innocent persons.

### **II. DEFINITIONS:**

A. Hostage Negotiators - Designated officers who have been specially trained to negotiate directly with the principal in a crisis situation.

### **III. HOSTAGE NEGOTIATIONS TEAM FUNCTION:**

A. The administration, supervision and control of the Hostage Negotiation Team will be the responsibility of the Chief Negotiator or Chief of Police designee. An officer of the rank of Lieutenant or higher will be designated as the Hostage Negotiations Team Commander.

B. Hostage negotiator's duties include, but are not limited to:

1. Responding to hostage situations and/or barricaded suspects,
2. Keeping the communication with subject(s) simple and flexible for changes as necessary, and
3. Continuing to assure the subject there is safety in surrender.

### **IV. PROCEDURE:**

A. The on-duty Shift Commander will request the Hostage Negotiation Team and the SWAT Team when he or she feels the situation involves snipers, barricaded suspects, hostages, or other similar situations. The Commanders of the SWAT and Hostage Negotiation Teams will review the known facts then decide if their teams will be deployed.

1. On scene members will **SECTION DELETED AS IT SHOWS DEPLOYMENT**

2. Dispatch Operations will notify Command Staff members, other appropriate personnel and open communication channels to other agencies if needed.

B. When the Hostage Negotiation Team is used:

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

a. Negotiators must wear a protective vest and appropriate attire.

2. Negotiators will be provided with all available information on the suspect(s), hostages, demands, and other available information. SWAT and Hostage Negotiation Teams Commanders will maintain direct communication while on scene to ensure effective coordination and discuss the responsibilities of each unit.

3. Communication with the suspect(s) will be keep simple and flexible.

4. Negotiators will secure audio recording equipment, surveillance equipment and other necessary equipment to further document the situation, is possible.

a. 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.

5. The negotiating officer will refrain from making promises to the crisis principal that cannot be kept, without command approval.

6. Every means possible will be used to prevent **SECTION DELETED AS IT SHOWS DEPLOYMENT**

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

8. If a throw phone line has to be delivered to the hostage taker, that function will be handled by the S.W.A.T. Team.

C. It is the agency's primary objective to use the expertise of the members of this Department to expedite the peaceful surrender of the suspect(s). Officers should utilize every verbal, scientific, humanistic, and tactical tool at their disposal to secure the safe release of the hostage(s) and to arrest the suspect(s).

D. The agency will obtain and maintain complete operative control of every aspect of any continuing incident within the scope of the Department's jurisdiction and within any applicable cooperative agreement.

E. All reasonable and practical means to ensure the safety of all persons involved will be used. Under no circumstances will the safety of law enforcement officers, hostages, or innocent parties be jeopardized to the benefit of suspects.

1. Fire medics will be notified by Dispatch Operations if it appears to be a possibility of injuries occurring.

F. Suspects will not be permitted **SECTION DELETED AS IT SHOWS DEPLOYMENT**

G. The authorization to use the SWAT Team **SECTION DELETED AS IT SHOWS DEPLOYMENT**

1. Use of force by the involved units will be in accordance with Department policy.

**V. TRAINING:**

A. Members who serve as hostage negotiators will receive training in negotiating techniques applicable to crisis-type situations.

B. Ongoing training in new techniques for crisis-type situations to include rescue operations should be attended by hostage negotiators periodically. Specialized instructors will be selected in accordance with training needs.

C. The Chief Hostage Negotiator or Chief of Police designee will be charged with monitoring all training, certification, and performance records maintained in the Police Department Training Unit for each negotiator.

D. Immediately following all incidents involving the use of negotiators, the negotiator(s) will return to headquarters and conduct a debriefing to critique the operation.

1. Any suggestions for correction of operational errors and procedural deficiencies will be presented to the Chief Negotiator.

2. A supplemental report to the original case report(s) will be prepared by the Negotiator(s) who were involved.

**VI. SELECTION CRITERIA:**

- A. Officers will be notified of vacancies on the Hostage Negotiation Team by the posting of notices and announcements in the Department news letter. Officers requesting assignment to the Hostage Negotiation Team will submit an application to the Staff Services Division.
- B. The selection process will be followed per SOP # I-8, Assignment to Specialized Positions/Components.
- C. An oral interview will be conducted by an interview board consisting of current Hostage Negotiation Team members.
- D. The Chief of Police or designee will approve all new members.

**VII. REFERENCE:**

- SOP # I-8 Assignment to Specialized Positions/Components.
- SOP # III-13 Use of Force.
- SOP # IV-25 SWAT Team Function.
- Hostage Situation Plan.

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

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Job Title Task Files: Shift Commander, SWAT Team Commander, Dispatch Operations, K-9 Unit Officers, PIO