

	SFASU POLICE DEPARTMENT	
	Policy 8.3 Emergency Response Team	
	Effective Date: 05/05/2020	Replaces:
	Approved:	John Fields, Jr. Chief of Police
	Reference: TBP 3.10, 3.11, 8.03, 8.04, 8.05, and 8.06.	

I. POLICY

The presence of a highly trained and skilled police tactical unit has been shown to substantially reduce the risk of injury or loss of life to the public, police officers, and suspects. A well-managed team response to critical incidents usually results in a successful resolution of these situations. It is the intent of this department to participate with a highly trained and skilled emergency response team (ERT) as a resource for the handling of critical or unusual police incidents.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the governing regulations in the selection, training, equipping, and use of the emergency response team.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. Hostage Situations: the holding of any person(s) against their will by an armed or potentially armed suspect.
- B. Barricade Situations: a standoff created by an armed or potentially armed suspect in any location, whether fortified or not, who is refusing to comply with police demands for surrender.
- C. Sniper Situations: the firing upon individuals, including police, by an armed suspect, whether stationary or mobile.
- D. High-Risk Apprehension: the arrest or apprehension of armed or potentially armed suspects where the likelihood of armed resistance is high.
- E. High-Risk Warrant Service: the service of search or arrest warrants where the warrant service matrix or policy recommends or requires the use of the emergency response team.
- F. Personal Protection: the security of special persons, such as VIP's, witnesses, or suspects, based on threat or potential threat to the well-being of those persons.

- G. Special Assignments: any assignment approved by the ERT Supervisor, based on a high level of threat.

IV. COMPOSITION AND STRUCTURE

- A. The emergency response team is comprised of the following:
 - 1. Nacogdoches Police Department ERT Commander;
 - 2. Officers of any rank from several local law enforcement agencies;
 - 3. Hostage negotiators; and
 - 4. Tactical medics.
- B. The Nacogdoches P.D. ERT commander will be responsible for the overall operations of the team.
- C. The ERT will also have ERT alternates available for deployment. These officers are not permanently assigned to the ERT but are available for activation.
- D. The alternates will be chosen from the same selection process as full-time ERT members.
- E. They will attend and participate in the training programs and monthly training.
- F. Alternates will re-certify on all individual skills and must maintain acceptable standards of performance as delineated in ERT qualification.

V. OPERATIONS

- A. When the team is activated for an operation, the ERT commander, or the acting supervisor, collaborates directly to the incident commander where one has been designated, or to the on-scene supervisor.
- B. The ERT commander is responsible for deployment of the ERT, tactical decision-making, and tactical resolution of the incident.
- C. The incident commander is subordinate to the ERT commander.
- D. Unless the ERT commander relinquishes control to a person outside the ERT, only someone in a leadership position within the ERT will attempt to direct, supervise, or control any element of the operation or any member of the ERT.
- E. The primary negotiator will manage the negotiations process.
- F. The negotiations unit will work under the direction of the ERT commander.

- G. Requests or demands received from the suspect through the negotiator may be approved or denied by the ERT commander.
- H. Face to face negotiations are discouraged and will only be conducted with the approval of the ERT Command. It is the policy of this department not to allow face-to-face negotiations with a subject suspected of posing a danger to others. If possible, a negotiator who must work on the inner perimeter will be armed and wear the appropriate body armor. Negotiators will not enter the inner perimeter without specific instructions from the ERT supervisor.
- I. The tactical medics will train with ERT and provide medical support during operations. At least one (1) tactical medic will be deployed for each operation.
- J. Tactical medics may be provided protective armor and other uniform accessories in accordance with their duties, but will not be armed unless they are also a licensed peace officer.
- K. During deployment, the tactical medics will report to the ERT commander (TBP 8.05).

VI. ACTIVATION PROCESS

- A. Each commander (rank of Lieutenant or higher) has the authority to immediately activate the team for any critical or unusual police incident within the jurisdictional boundaries.
- B. Commanders will advise communications of the situation and the need for the ERT. Communications will contact the ERT commander and provide the contact number for the shift supervisor.
- C. Any division or unit within the department may request the assistance of the ERT in planning or conducting appropriate operations. The unit commander will contact the ERT commander with the request. If the ERT commander approves the request, the team will be activated (TBP: 8.05).

VII. SELECTION PROCESS

- A. ERT Members
 - 1. Assignment to the ERT will be on a voluntary basis and will consist of sworn personnel with the exception of tactical medics. ERT members will be selected from a combined process between the Stephen F. Austin State University Police Department and the Nacogdoches Police Department.
 - 2. All ERT members must exhibit a sound mental and physical condition.
 - 3. Criteria for applications will consist of the following:

- a. A minimum of two years of active law-enforcement experience with the department.
 - b. A physical agility test designed and approved by the Nacogdoches Police Department. Candidates will be provided the standards at least six (6) months in advance of the physical agility test.
 - c. Candidates must pass a comprehensive background investigation that assesses the applicant's potential performance and mental suitability for ERT assignment.
 - d. Participate in a verbal interview conducted by the ERT commander and a board appointed by the Nacogdoches Chief of Police.
 - e. Under some circumstances an applicant may be required to pass a psychological test taken after completion of the interview.
4. Once accepted and assigned to the ERT, all operational team members and alternates, regardless of rank or position, must maintain acceptable standards of performance as delineated in ERT qualification.
 5. All operational team members must successfully complete a basic SWAT School, or equivalent, prior to active participation on the entry team (TBP 8.04).

B. Hostage Negotiators:

1. Hostage negotiators are a part of the ERT but perform only hostage negotiation duties. The negotiation team members will be subject to call out, and will perform negotiator duties in addition to their regular duty assignments.
2. Minimum qualifications:
 - a. Two years continuous full-time service.
 - b. Agency / Supervisor recommendation.
3. When an opening for a negotiator occurs, the ERT commander will announce that there is an opening for a member of the negotiation team. The announcement will include an explanation of the minimum qualifications.
4. Hostage negotiators will meet the same physical requirements as ERT members and will re-qualify with the ERT. Negotiations personnel are not held to SWAT Standards of fitness.
5. Officers interested in the position will submit a letter of interest along with their qualifications. The Chief of Police will then select an officer(s) to fill the vacancy and the approved candidate must successfully complete the Nacogdoches P.D. ERT qualifications.
6. Nacogdoches P.D. Hostage Negotiations selection process consists of:

- a. Oral Interview with, at a minimum, the Negotiations Team Leader, ERT Commander or designee and a currently active negotiator.
- b. Scenario based negotiation simulation.
- c. Administrative review.
- d. Under some circumstances an applicant may be required to pass a psychological test taken after completion of the interview (TBP: 8.03).

C. Tactical Medic

Selected paramedics from the Fire or EMS departments will be assigned to the (ERT). ERT commander will make the selection(s). Let's just refer this to the SWAT Operations Manual.

VIII. RE-QUALIFICATION AND REMOVAL FROM THE TEAM

- A. ERT officers must pass a re-qualification physical agility test bi-annually.
- B. Failure to pass the re-qualification will result in the team member being placed in a temporary, non-deployment status. Time requirements of non-deployment status will be determined on an individual basis by the ERT commander.
- C. Failure to meet the minimum acceptable standard within the designated period of time will result in removal from the team.
- D. Participation in ERT is a voluntary assignment. As such, a team member may be removed from the team, without cause, when it is deemed necessary for the good of the team by the ERT commander.
- E. Being placed in a temporary, non-deployment status more than once may result in removal from the team.

IX. RESIGNATIONS AND FILLING VACANCIES

- A. A team member may voluntarily withdraw from the team at any time, for any reason.
- B. Team members leaving ERT will not be eligible to reapply to ERT for a period of two years.
- C. With the permission of the Chief of Police and ERT commander, a member who leaves ERT may be allowed to remain as a specialist.
- D. When a vacancy on the team occurs, any officer meeting the above qualifications may apply.
- E. Vacancies on the alternate team will be filled from the list of all other qualified applicants. This list will be in effect for one year from the date of testing.

X. TRAINING STANDARDS

A. ERT Team Training

1. The ERT and alternates will conduct training a minimum of 12 hours per month. They will train on appropriate subjects related to the mission of the ERT.
2. All training will be documented by the ERT commander and/or his designee, and training records will be maintained on file in the Nacogdoches PD training office.
3. All training will be performance oriented and ERT task specific.
4. The ERT will maintain a current task manual that lists the standards of performance for each task, for each individual, and for the team level.
5. Individual team members will be re-certified once per year on all individual skills, and the team will be re-certified once per year on all team-level skills.
6. Failure to re-certify will result in immediate focus on re-mediation of basic skills.
7. Continued failure to re-certify, after appropriate re-mediation, will be dealt with as “failure to meet minimum standards.”
8. The training program will include regular updates on legal issues facing ERT operations, warrant service, deadly force policy, and legal issues (**TBP 3.10**).

B. Hostage Negotiation Training

1. Training is essential to the success of hostage negotiations. It is necessary for the successful conclusion to incidents that threaten the public as well as law-enforcement officers, and it limits the agency’s liability exposure. Hostage negotiators are required to comply with the following additional training requirements:
 - a. After their assignment they must attend Basic and Advanced Hostage Negotiations. Due to unforeseen circumstances such as man power shortages, availability of approved courses, funding, etc. no specific time frame is established for completion. The Negotiations Team Leader will coordinate attendance.
 - b. In addition, members of the CNT must attend regularly scheduled in-service training as instructed by the Negotiations Team Leader.
 - c. Failure to attend training requirements may result in removal from the hostage negotiation Team (**TBP: 3.11**).

XI. EQUIPMENT STANDARDS

- A. The department will supply their ERT team members with the following safety equipment:
1. Ballistic helmet;
 2. Safety glasses and goggles;
 3. Hearing protection;
 4. Ballistic vest, complete with Threat Level IV insert;
 5. Load-bearing vest or duty belt for tactical equipment;
 6. Special weapons as authorized;
 7. Appropriate amount of ammunition for weapons training and qualification;
 8. Portable hand-held radio with earpiece / headset with microphone;
 9. Chemical agent mask;
 10. Utility uniform of color and pattern consistent with the area of operation;
and
 11. TCCC medical aid kit.
- B. ERT members will wear appropriate utility type uniforms and footwear of an approved color/pattern.
- C. Uniforms will have clearly visible and identifiable placards, patches, badges, or lettering that identifies the wearer of the uniform as a law-enforcement officer. The ERT commander or Team Leader must approve all other items of personal wear or equipment.
- D. Team members are responsible for the care and maintenance of all equipment issued to them. Members must take appropriate care to maintain the equipment in full mission readiness. Quarterly, the ERT commander, Team Leader or other designee, will conduct a documented inspection of all ERT members' assigned equipment for operational readiness.

XII. SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- A. The ERT may utilize special equipment, as listed below, in an attempt to lessen the risk of injury or death to all persons concerned during an ERT operation. However, the ERT recognizes that the use of the special equipment in no way implies or guarantees that injury or death will not occur during an ERT operation.
1. Primary entry weapons -- submachine guns, entry shotguns, and short-barreled weapons -- enable team members to acquire rapid target acquisition, and high levels of accuracy. They also provide maneuverability, reliability and accuracy.

2. High-caliber rifles, also called counter-sniper rifles, allow the team member to place highly accurate rounds where needed to help resolve life-threatening incidents.
3. Authorized officers must successfully complete a TCOLE approved training course on the specified weapon and re-qualify with the weapon at least bi-annually.
4. ERT members are authorized to carry assigned weapons in their vehicle on a daily basis at the discretion of the ERT commander.
5. Less lethal weapons and ammunition are those that propel a round or device that is not intended to be lethal. These are designed to offer an alternative to the use of deadly force when that is appropriate.
6. Flash/noise diversionary devices are designed to save lives and reduce the potential for shooting situations by providing a diversion for the entry of ERT members into a hazardous area. These utilize a bright flash of light followed immediately by a loud noise.
7. Breaching tools and ammunition, such as rams, pry bars, hydraulic or electronic machines, special frangible shotgun rounds, etc., are designed to force entry into barricaded or secured areas.
8. The ERT commander will ensure that only team members properly trained and certified in the use of the special equipment will utilize the equipment.
9. The ERT supervisor will be responsible for establishing the certification standards and criteria for the team.

B. ERT Vehicle

1. The purpose of the ERT vehicles is to transport equipment and personnel to the scene of an ERT incident. The ERT vehicles may also be used as a mobile command post or for other needs of the team.
2. The ERT vehicles may be driven on out-of-town ERT calls, training, or demonstrations as approved by the Nacogdoches Chief of Police.
3. The ERT vehicles may only be used by ERT members.
4. Use of the ERT vehicles must be approved by the ERT commander. Use is automatically approved during an ERT call-up.
5. The ERT commander will designate one or more members of the ERT as drivers, and provide documented training in the operation of the ERT

vehicles. Only designated ERT members may drive the ERT vehicles outside of exigent circumstances.

6. The ERT supervisor will designate one driver to be responsible for the maintenance of the ERT vehicles. This driver is responsible for documenting, in writing, monthly inspections of the ERT vehicles and equipment stored in the ERT vehicle.
7. The ERT commander may post in the ERT vehicles a list of equipment normally stored within that vehicle.

XIII. AFTER ACTION CRITIQUE

- A. At the completion of all operations and significant training events, the ERT commander will conduct an after-action review.
- B. The purpose of this review will be to create a forum for team members to offer information for the improvement of the team. All information discussed and documented will be maintained by the ERT commander.
- C. After-action report requirements are discussed in Policy 8.1, Unusual Occurrences.

XIV. NACOGDOCHES SWAT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

- A. The Nacogdoches SWAT team maintains a standard operating procedure which is made available to all participating agencies and operational members.
- B. Reasonable attempts were made to ensure these directives are consistent to those within the SWAT SOP manual.
- C. Should any operational variances be discovered between these documents, the direction within the SWAT SOP manual prevails.