



# Peoria Police Department

Policy Manual

## Special Assignment Unit

### 408.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Special Assignment Unit (SAU) is comprised of two specialized teams: the Crisis Negotiation Team (CNT) and the Special Weapons and Tactics team (SWAT). The unit has been established to provide specialized support in handling critical field operations where intense negotiations and/or special tactical deployment methods beyond the capacity of field officers appears to be necessary.

#### 408.1.1 OPERATIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

The Policy Manual sections pertaining to the Special Assignment Unit are divided into Administrative and Operational Policy and Procedures. Since situations that necessitate the need for such a law enforcement response vary greatly from incident to incident, and such events often demand on-scene evaluation, the Operational Policy outlined in this section serves as a guideline to Department personnel, allowing for appropriate on-scene decision-making as required. The Administrative Procedures, however, are more restrictive and few exceptions should be taken.

**408.1.2 SWAT TEAM DEFINED** **SWAT team** -A designated unit of law enforcement officers that is specifically trained and equipped to work as a coordinated team to resolve critical incidents that are so hazardous, complex or unusual that they may exceed the capabilities of first responders or investigative units. This includes, but is not limited to, hostage taking, barricaded suspects, snipers, terrorist acts and other high-risk incidents. As a matter of department policy, such a unit may also be used to serve high-risk warrants, both search and arrest, where public and officer safety issues warrant the use of such a unit.

### 408.2 TRAINING

#### 408.3 POLICY

It is the policy of this department to maintain a SWAT team and to provide the equipment, manpower and training necessary to maintain a SWAT team. The SWAT team should develop sufficient resources to perform three basic operational functions:

- Command and control
- Containment
- Entry/apprehension/rescue

It is understood that it is difficult to categorize specific capabilities for critical incidents. Training needs may vary based on the experience level of the team personnel, team administrators and potential incident commanders. Nothing in this policy shall prohibit individual teams from responding to a situation that exceeds their training levels due to the exigency of the circumstances. The preservation of innocent human life is paramount.

#### 408.3.1 POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

A needs assessment should be conducted to determine the type and extent of SWAT missions and operations that are appropriate to this department. The assessment should

*Special Assignment Unit*

consider the team's capabilities and limitations and should be reviewed annually by the SWAT commander or a designee.

**408.3.2 ORGANIZATIONAL PROCEDURES**

This department shall develop a separate written set of organizational procedures that should address, at minimum:

- Locally identified specific missions the team is capable of performing.
- Team organization and function.
- Personnel selection and retention criteria.
- Training and required competencies.
- Procedures for activation and deployment.
- Command and control issues, including a clearly defined command structure.
- Multi-agency response.
- Extra-jurisdictional response.
- Specialized functions and supporting resources.

**408.3.3 OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES**

This department shall develop a separate written set of operational procedures, in accordance with its level of capability, using sound risk reduction practices. The operational procedures should be patterned after the National Tactical Officers Association's Suggested SWAT Best Practices. Because such procedures are specific to SAU members and will outline tactical and officer safety issues, they are classified as confidential security data and are not included within this policy. The operational procedures should include, at minimum:

Designating personnel responsible for developing an operational or tactical plan prior to, and/or during SWAT operations (time permitting).

- All SWAT team members should have an understanding of operational planning.
- SWAT team training should consider planning for both spontaneous and planned events.
- SWAT teams should incorporate medical emergency contingency planning as part of the SWAT operational plan.
- Plans for mission briefings should be conducted prior to an operation, unless circumstances require immediate deployment.
- When reasonably possible, briefings should include the specialized units and supporting resources.

Protocols for a sustained operation should be developed. These may include relief, rotation of personnel and augmentation of resources.

A generic checklist to be worked through prior to initiating a tactical action should be developed to provide a means of conducting a threat assessment to determine the appropriate response and resources necessary, including the use of SWAT.

The appropriate role for a trained negotiator should be defined.

*Special Assignment Unit*

A standard method of determining whether a warrant should be regarded as high risk.

A method for deciding how best to serve a high-risk warrant with all reasonably foreseeable alternatives being reviewed in accordance with risk/benefit criteria prior to selecting the method of response.

Post-incident scene management, including:

- Documentation of the incident.
- Transition to investigations and/or other units.
- Debriefing after every deployment of the SWAT team.
  
- After-action team debriefing provides evaluation and analysis of critical incidents and affords the opportunity for individual and team assessments. It also helps to identify training needs and reinforces sound risk management practices.
- Debriefing should not be conducted until involved officers have had the opportunity to individually complete the necessary reports or provide formal statements. o To maintain candor and a meaningful exchange, debriefing will generally not be recorded.
- When appropriate, debriefing should include specialized units and resources.

Sound risk management analysis.

Standardization of equipment.

#### **408.4 TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

The SWAT/SAU commander shall conduct an annual SWAT training needs assessment to ensure that training is conducted within team capabilities and department policy.

##### **408.4.1 INITIAL TRAINING**

SWAT team operators and SWAT supervisors/team leaders should not be deployed until successful completion of an approved basic SWAT course or its equivalent.

- To avoid unnecessary or redundant training, previous training completed by members may be considered equivalent when the hours and content or topics meet or exceed requirements determined by the Department.

##### **408.4.2 UPDATED TRAINING**

Appropriate team training for the specialized SWAT functions and other supporting resources should be completed prior to full deployment of the team.

SWAT team operators and SWAT supervisors/team leaders should complete update or refresher training every 24 months.

##### **408.4.3 SUPERVISION AND MANAGEMENT TRAINING**

Command and executive personnel are encouraged to attend training for managing the SWAT function at the organizational level. This is to ensure that personnel who provide active oversight at the scene of SWAT operations understand the purpose and capabilities of the teams.

*Special Assignment Unit*

Command personnel who may assume incident command responsibilities should attend a SWAT or critical incident commander course or its equivalent. SWAT command personnel should attend a department-approved SWAT commander or tactical commander course or its equivalent.

**408.4.4 SWAT ONGOING TRAINING**

Training shall be coordinated by the SAU commander. The SAU commander may conduct monthly training exercises that include a review and critique of personnel and their performance in the exercise in addition to specialized training. Training shall consist of the following:

- Each SWAT member shall perform a physical fitness test twice each year. A minimum qualifying score must be attained by each team member.
- Any SWAT team member failing to attain the minimum physical fitness qualification score will be notified of the requirement to retest. Within 30 days of the previous physical fitness test date, the member required to qualify shall report to a team supervisor and complete the entire physical fitness test. Failure to qualify after a second attempt may result in dismissal from the team.
- Those members who are on vacation, ill or are on limited duty status with a medical provider's note of approval on the test date shall be responsible for reporting to a team supervisor and taking the test within 30 days of their return to regular duty. Any member who fails to arrange for and perform the physical fitness test within the 30-day period, shall be considered as having failed to attain a qualifying score for that test period.
- Semi-annually each SWAT team member shall perform the mandatory SWAT handgun qualification course. The qualification course shall consist of the SWAT basic drill for the handgun. Failure to qualify will require the officer to seek remedial training from a Rangemaster approved by the SAU commander. Team members who fail to qualify will not be used in SWAT operations until qualified. Team members who fail to qualify must retest within 30 days. Failure to qualify within 30 days with or without remedial training may result in dismissal from the team.
- Semi-annually each SWAT team member shall perform a mandatory SWAT qualification course for any specialty weapon issued to or used by the officer during SWAT operations. Failure to qualify will require the officer to seek remedial training from a Rangemaster approved by the SAU commander. Team members who fail to qualify on their specialty weapon may not utilize the specialty weapon on SWAT operations until qualified. Team members who fail to qualify must retest within 30 days. Failure to qualify with specialty weapons within 30 days may result in the team member being removed from the team or permanently disqualified from use of that particular specialty weapon.

**408.4.5 TRAINING SAFETY**

Use of a designated safety officer should be considered for all tactical training.

**408.4.6 SCENARIO-BASED TRAINING**

SWAT teams should participate in scenario-based training that simulates the tactical operational environment. Such training is an established method of improving performance during an actual deployment.

*Special Assignment Unit*

**408.4.7 TRAINING DOCUMENTATION**

Individual and team training shall be documented and records maintained by the Personnel and Training Section. Such documentation shall be maintained in each member's individual training file. A separate agency SWAT training file shall be maintained with documentation and records of all team training.

**408.5 UNIFORMS, EQUIPMENT AND FIREARMS**

**408.5.1 UNIFORMS**

SWAT teams from this department should wear uniforms that clearly identify team members as law enforcement officers. It is recognized that certain tactical conditions may require covert movement. Attire may be selected appropriate to the specific mission.

**408.5.2 EQUIPMENT**

SWAT teams from this department should be adequately equipped to meet the specific mission identified by the Department.

**408.5.3 FIREARMS**

Weapons and equipment used by SWAT, the specialized units and the supporting resources should be Department-issued or approved, including any modifications, additions or attachments.

**408.5.4 OPERATIONAL READINESS INSPECTION**

The commander of the SAU shall appoint a SAU supervisor to perform an operational readiness inspection of all unit equipment at least quarterly. The result of the inspection will be forwarded to the SAU commander. The inspections will include personal equipment issued to members of the unit as well as special use equipment maintained for periodic or occasional use in the SWAT vehicle.

**408.6 MANAGEMENT/SUPERVISION OF SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT UNIT**

The commander of the SAU shall be selected by the Chief of Police upon recommendation of the staff.

**408.6.1 PRIMARY UNIT MANAGER**

Under the direction of the Chief of Police, through the Operations Deputy Police Chief, the Special Assignment Unit shall be managed by a lieutenant.

**408.6.2 TEAM SUPERVISORS**

The CNT and each SWAT team will be supervised by a sergeant.

The team supervisors shall be selected by the Chief of Police upon specific recommendation by the staff and the SAU Commander.

The following represent the supervisor responsibilities for the Special Assignment Unit.

- The CNT supervisor's primary responsibility is to supervise the operations of the team, to include deployment, training, first-line participation and other duties as directed by the SAU lieutenant.

*Special Assignment Unit*

- The SWAT team supervisor's primary responsibility is to supervise the operations of the team, which will include deployment, training, first-line participation and other duties as directed by the SAU lieutenant.

#### **408.7 CRISIS NEGOTIATION TEAM ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**

The CNT has been established to provide skilled verbal communicators, who may be utilized to attempt to de-escalate and effect surrender in critical situations where suspects have taken hostages, barricaded themselves or have suicidal tendencies.

The following procedures serve as directives for the administrative operation of the CNT.

##### **408.7.1 SELECTION OF PERSONNEL**

Interested sworn personnel, who are off probation, shall submit a request to their appropriate Deputy Police Chief of Operations. A copy will be forwarded to the CNT lieutenant and the CNT sergeant. Qualified applicants will then be invited to an oral interview. The oral board will consist of the CNT lieutenant, the CNT sergeant and a third person to be selected by the two. Interested personnel shall be evaluated by the following criteria:

- Recognized competence and ability as evidenced by performance.
- Demonstrated good judgment and an understanding of the critical role of a negotiator and the negotiation process.
- Effective communication skills to ensure success as a negotiator.
- Special skills, training or appropriate education as it pertains to the assignment.
- Commitment to the unit, realizing that the assignment may necessitate unusual working hours, conditions and training obligations.

The oral board shall submit a list of successful applicants to the staff for final selection.

##### **408.7.2 TRAINING OF NEGOTIATORS**

Those officers selected as members of the CNT should attend a department-approved basic negotiator's course prior to deployment in an actual crisis situation. Untrained officers may be used in a support or training capacity. Additional training will be coordinated by the team supervisor.

A minimum of one training day per quarter will be required to provide the opportunity for role playing and situational training that is necessary to maintain proper skills. This will be coordinated by the team supervisor.

Continual evaluation of a team member's performance and efficiency as it relates to the positive operation of the unit shall be conducted by the team supervisor. Performance and efficiency levels established by the team supervisor will be met and maintained by all team members. Any member of the CNT who performs or functions at a level less than satisfactory shall be subject to dismissal from the unit.

#### **408.8 SWAT TEAM ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**

The SWAT team was established to provide a skilled and trained team that may be deployed during events requiring specialized tactics, in situations where suspects have taken hostages and/or barricaded themselves, as well as prolonged or predictable situations in which persons who are armed or suspected of being armed pose a danger to themselves or others.

*Special Assignment Unit*

The following procedures serve as directives for the administrative operation of the SWAT team.

**408.8.1 SELECTION OF PERSONNEL**

Interested sworn personnel who are off probation shall submit a request to their appropriate Deputy Police Chief of Operations, a copy of which will be forwarded to the SWAT lieutenant and other SWAT supervisors. Those qualifying applicants will then be invited to participate in the testing process. The order of the tests will be given at the discretion of the SWAT lieutenant. The testing process will consist of an oral board, physical agility test, and a SWAT basic handgun and team evaluation.

- Oral board: The oral board will consist of personnel selected by the SWAT lieutenant. Applicants will be evaluated by the following criteria:
  - Recognized competence and ability as evidenced by performance.
  - Demonstrated good judgment and an understanding of the critical role of a SWAT team member.
  - Special skills, training or appropriate education as it pertains to the assignment.
  - Commitment to the unit, realizing that the additional assignment may necessitate unusual working hours, conditions and training obligations.
- Physical agility: The physical agility test is designed to determine the physical capabilities of the applicant as they relate to performance of SWAT-related duties. The test and scoring procedure will be established by the SWAT lieutenant. A minimum qualifying score shall be attained by the applicant to be considered for the position.
- SWAT basic handgun: Candidates will be invited to shoot the SWAT basic drill for the handgun. A minimum qualifying score of 90% and will be an AZPOST approved course of fire.
- Team evaluation: Current team members will evaluate each candidate on field tactical skills, teamwork, ability to work under stress, communication skills, judgment and any special skills that could benefit the team.
- A list of successful applicants shall be submitted to the staff by the SWAT lieutenant for final selection.

**408.8.2 TEAM EVALUATION**

Continual evaluation of a team member's performance and efficiency as it relates to the positive operation of the unit shall be conducted by the SWAT lieutenant. The performance and efficiency level, as established by the team supervisor, will be met and maintained by all SWAT team members. Any member of the SWAT team who performs or functions at a level less than satisfactory shall be subject to dismissal from the team.

**408.9 OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT UNIT**

The following procedures serve as guidelines for the operational deployment of the Special Assignment Unit. Generally, the SWAT team and the CNT will be activated together. It is recognized, however, that a tactical team may be used in a situation not requiring the physical presence of the CNT, such as warrant service operations. This shall be at the discretion of the SAU lieutenant(s).

*Special Assignment Unit*

**408.9.1 ON-SCENE DETERMINATION**

The supervisor in charge at the scene of a particular event will assess whether the Special Assignment Unit should respond. Upon final determination by the Patrol Lieutenant, the SAU lieutenant(s) will be notified.

**408.9.2 APPROPRIATE SITUATIONS FOR USE OF SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT UNIT**

The following are examples of incidents that may result in the activation of the Special Assignment Unit:

- Barricaded suspects who refuse an order to surrender.
- Incidents where hostages have been taken.
- Cases of suicide threats.
- Arrests of dangerous persons.
- Any situation where a SAU response could enhance the ability to preserve life, maintain social order and ensure the protection of property.

**408.9.3 OUTSIDE AGENCY REQUESTS**

Requests by field personnel for assistance from outside agency crisis units must be approved by the Patrol Lieutenant. Deployment of the Peoria Police Department Special Assignment Unit in response to requests by other agencies must be authorized by a SAU Commander.

**408.9.4 MULTIJURISDICTIONAL SWAT OPERATIONS**

The SWAT team, including specialized units and supporting resources, should develop protocols, agreements, memorandums of understanding, collective bargaining agreements or working relationships to support multijurisdictional or regional responses.

- If it is anticipated that multijurisdictional SWAT operations will regularly be conducted, SWAT multi-agency and multidisciplinary joint training exercises are encouraged.
- Members of the Peoria Police Department SWAT team shall operate under the policies, procedures and command of the Peoria Police Department when working in a multi-agency situation.

**408.9.5 MOBILIZATION OF SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT UNIT**

The on-scene supervisor shall make a request to the Patrol Lieutenant for the Special Assignment Unit to respond. The Patrol Lieutenant shall then notify the SAU lieutenant(s). If unavailable, a team supervisor shall be notified. A current mobilization list shall be maintained in the Patrol Lieutenant(s) office by the SAU lieutenant(s). The Patrol Lieutenant will then notify the Operations Deputy Police Chief of Operations as soon as practicable.

The Patrol Lieutenant should advise the SAU lieutenant(s) with as much of the following information as is available at the time:

- The number of suspects, known weapons and resources
- If the suspect is in control of hostages
- If the suspect is barricaded
- The type of crime involved
- If the suspect has threatened or attempted suicide

### *Special Assignment Unit*

- The location and safe approach to the command post
- The extent of any perimeter and the number of officers involved
- Any other important facts critical to the immediate situation, and whether the suspect has refused an order to surrender.

The SAU lieutenant(s) shall then call selected officers to respond.

#### **408.9.6 FIELD UNIT RESPONSIBILITIES**

While waiting for the Special Assignment Unit, field personnel should, if safe, practicable and if sufficient resources exist:

- Establish an inner and outer perimeter.
- Establish a command post outside of the inner perimeter.
- Establish a patrol emergency/arrest response team prior to SWAT arrival.
- The team actions may include:
  - Securing any subject or suspect who may surrender.
  - Taking action to mitigate a deadly threat or behavior.
- Evacuate any injured persons or citizens in the zone of danger.
- Attempt to establish preliminary communications with the suspect. Once the SAU has arrived, all negotiations should generally be halted to allow the negotiators and SWAT team time to set up.
- Be prepared to brief the SAU lieutenant(s) on the situation.
- Plan for and stage anticipated resources.

#### **408.9.7 ON-SCENE COMMAND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Upon arrival of the Special Assignment Unit, the Incident Commander shall brief the SAU lieutenant(s) and team supervisors. Upon review, it will be the Incident Commander's decision, with input from the SAU lieutenant(s), whether to deploy the Special Assignment Unit. Once the Incident Commander authorizes deployment, the SAU lieutenant(s) will be responsible for the tactical portion of the operation. The Incident Commander shall continue supervision of the command post operation, outer perimeter security and support for the Special Assignment Unit. The Incident Commander and the SAU lieutenant(s) or a designee shall maintain communications at all times.

#### **408.9.8 COMMUNICATION WITH SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT UNIT PERSONNEL**

All of those persons who are non-Special Assignment Unit personnel should refrain from any non-emergency contact or from interference with any member of the unit during active negotiations. Operations require the utmost in concentration by involved personnel. No one should interrupt or communicate with SAU personnel directly. All non-emergency communications shall be channeled through the CNT sergeant or a designee.