

TEXARKANA, TEXAS POLICE DEPARTMENT  
GENERAL ORDERS MANUAL

<i>Effective Date</i> February 1, 2008		<i>Amended Date</i> January 12, 2022		<i>Directive</i> 8.04.1	
<i>Subject</i> Emergency Response Team (SWAT) Officer Selection					
<i>Reference</i>					
<i>Distribution</i> All Personnel City Manager City Attorney		<i>TPCA Best Practices Recognition Program Reference</i> 8.04.1 Emergency Response Team Officer		<i>Review Date</i> January 12, 2022	
				<i>Pages</i> 4	

This Operations Directive is for internal use only and does not enhance an officer's civil or criminal liability in any way. It should not be construed as a creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims. Violations of this Operations Directive, if proven, may only form the basis for a complaint by this Department, and only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

**SECTION 1 PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to establish provisions for the selection of Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team personnel.

**SECTION 2 POLICY**

It is the policy of the Department to maintain a Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) emergency response unit. The SWAT Team is committed to the resolution of difficult police situations outside the realm of the ordinary patrol response, through the use of developed skills, tactics, specialized equipment, and specialized capabilities. SWAT Team members will be selected according to the provisions in this directive.

**SECTION 3 PROCEDURES**

**A. COMMANDER APPOINTMENT**

1. The SWAT Team operates under the direction of the SWAT Commander. This person is a top or middle level manager, usually a division commander, who participates in the decision making and problem solving process and approves all tactical decisions, but generally is not involved with specific deployment of personnel and the implementation of tactical plans. The SWAT Commander can provide updated information to the Chief of Police, or his designee.
2. The SWAT Commander will be appointed by the Chief of Police based upon experience, knowledge of the position, leadership, and other factors which enable to SWAT Commander to perform the duties.

**B. SELECTION OF SWAT OPERATIONS COMMANDER AND COORDINATORS**

1. The SWAT Operations Commander and Coordinators should be chosen from former SWAT members who have had additional training in the administration of and operational control of tactical situations. The SWAT Commander will select an Operations Commander(s) subject to the approval of the Chief of Police.

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2. The police marksmen should be chosen from existing SWAT personnel when possible. If not, the marksmen shall be selected in the same process as other team members but shall undergo specialized training pursuant to their assignment. Prior to deployment as a primary marksman, each member should have attended and satisfactorily completed a basic sniper course of instruction. Marksmen should also attend a re-certification course every thirty-six months, if such training is available.
3. Team leaders should have been a team member prior to assignment as a team leader. Assignment is based on past performance, Commander's recommendations, and ability to lead by example and follow directed orders. Team leaders should strive to maintain knowledge in tactics, equipment and personnel matters.
4. Hostage Negotiators (HNG) shall be selected from those applicants who volunteer for this assignment. Negotiators should be selected on their ability to maintain calm in stressful situations, be patient, with good decision-making skills, be well versed in methods of conflict resolution, and be recommended by their immediate supervisors. The letter of interest and supervisor recommendation shall be forwarded through the chain of command to the Division Commander for review of work performance. Negotiators shall be selected following participation in an oral board comprised of members of SWAT, including members of the HNG section. The Chief of Police shall review the oral board recommendation for selection and have responsibility for appointment of HNG personnel assigned to the HNG Unit.

C. SELECTION OF NEW SWAT TEAM MEMBERS

1. All members of the SWAT Team unit will be volunteers unless assigned by the Chief of Police. Members should have completed the field-training program and have successfully completed all aspects of probationary employment. In addition, the candidate should have a minimum of three (3) years prior law enforcement experience unless otherwise determined by the Chief of Police.
2. Requests for appointment to the SWAT Team shall be forwarded to the SWAT Operations Commander. The SWAT Operations Commander or his designee will conduct a review of each candidate. The review should include an evaluation of the candidate's work performance, leave, usage, commendations, disciplinary actions, special training, and firearms qualifications.
3. Candidates will undergo physical and marksmanship assessments and will participate in an oral interview conducted by SWAT members. The SWAT Operations Commander will administer the oral interview and physical assessment process with the assistance of other team members as is deemed appropriate.
4. Personnel selected to fill a tactical vacancy with SWAT will be required to pass a psychological examination to be administered by licensed psychologist.
5. The candidates will be ranked in order and positions filled by those candidates selected by the interviewers. Those personnel placed on the eligibility list will be notified in writing, along with those who do not successfully complete the process. The qualification list shall be effective for one calendar year. Vacancies should be filled as soon as possible.
6. The Chief of Police shall review the oral board's recommendation for SWAT Team selection(s) and have final responsibility for appointment.

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7. Applicants selected for positions may be removed from SWAT at any time for failure to conform to standards, violating policies or procedures, or for any other reason as determined by the Chief of Police.

**D. PHYSICAL ASSESSMENT FOR NEW SWAT CANDIDATES**

1. All new SWAT candidates must pass the physical assessment consisting of a 1.5-mile run, 100-yard equipment carry, burpees, squats and pull-ups. Candidates not passing the physical assessment will not be allowed to continue in the selection event.
2. Prior to initiating the above listed physical assessment, each candidate will perform warm-up and stretching exercises to reduce the potential for injury.

**E. FIREARMS QUALIFICATION PROTOCOL**

1. Qualification – All new SWAT candidates must have passed the established Texarkana Texas Police Department handgun and patrol rifle qualification courses with a minimum score of 90 percent within the previous six months. Candidates will be given an opportunity to successfully complete the qualification courses on the day of the selection event or at another reasonable time as determined by the selection board.
2. Stress Course – Each candidate will fire a timed stress course, which should consist of several targets. This course will require candidates to make deliberate shots to the torso, head, or pelvis as instructed. The course will require the candidate to move quickly and safely with his or her weapon, between multiple firing points. The course should include small targets, (head size or smaller), that respond to bullet impact (reactive target). Shots that fail to impact the intended target will result in a penalty. Any safety violation will result in disqualification.
3. Personnel applying for a position as Police Marksman will be required to complete an additional course of fire utilizing a long rifle provided by SWAT.

**F. ORAL INTERVIEW**

1. The oral interview board should consist of no less than four (4) current members of SWAT including the SWAT Operations Commander and an Assistant Commander. The questions posed by interview members should include, but not be limited to the following:
  - a. Experience, training or special skills.
  - b. Reason for application to this specialized unit.
  - c. Some situational questions to determine the candidate's reasoning skills.
  - d. Problem areas that might adversely affect the candidate's ability to function effectively.
  - e. Any other questions deemed pertinent by the interview board.
2. All scores and times resulting from the physical and firearms examinations will be recorded by the SWAT Operations Commander or his designee. The results will be provided to the members of the oral interview board prior to candidate interviews. After the interview(s), the board will make the recommendation to the Chief of Police for final appointment.

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G. RESIGNATION FROM THE SWAT TEAM

In the event a member of SWAT Team determines that he/she is no longer capable of performing the duties associated with the voluntary assignment to the unit, the member will forward in writing, the reason(s) for requesting separation from the unit. The letter will be submitted to the SWAT Commander. The SWAT Commander will make a recommendation to the Chief of Police who will make the final decision on the assignment.

H. RESPONSIBILITY

1. All members of the Department shall know and comply with all aspects of this directive.
2. All Division Commanders and supervisory personnel are responsible for ensuring compliance with the provisions and intent of this directive.