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|  | **XXXX POLICE DEPARTMENT** | |
| **Policy 8.3 Emergency Response Team** | |
| **Effective Date:** | **Replaces:** |
| **Approved: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**  **Chief of Police** | |
| **Reference:** TBP: 3.10, 3.11, 8.03, 8.04, 8.05, and 8.06. | |

[Note: Some agencies may not use emergency response teams (ERT) or SWAT teams. If your agency does not have a team, this policy can be deleted. Texas Best Practices does not require an ERT but if you do have one you must have policies on the selection, training, and deployment. Your agency may have a much more detailed policy. This is a basic policy that will meet Best Practices Standards but should be edited to conform to your selection and training requirements.]

1. **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 provide for a highly trained and skilled emergency response team (ERT) as a resource for the handling of critical or unusual police incidents.

1. PURPOSE

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

1. **DEFINITIONS**
   1. Hostage Situations: the holding of any person(s) against their will by an armed or potentially armed suspect.
   2. 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.
   3. Sniper Situations: the firing upon individuals, including police, by an armed suspect, whether stationary or mobile.
   4. High-Risk Apprehension: the arrest or apprehension of armed or potentially armed suspects where the likelihood of armed resistance is high.
   5. 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.
   6. 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.
   7. Special Assignments: any assignment approved by the ERT Supervisor, based on a high level of threat.
2. **COMPOSITION AND STRUCTURE**
   1. The emergency response team is comprised of the following:
      1. One supervisor
      2. Seven officers of any rank
      3. Two hostage negotiators
      4. One tactical medic.
   2. The ERT supervisor, appointed by the Chief of Police, will be responsible for the overall operations of the team.
   3. The ERT will also have ERT alternates available for deployment. The Chief of Police will determine the number of ERT alternates. These officers are not permanently assigned to the ERT but are available for activation.
   4. The alternates will be chosen from the same selection process as full-time ERT members.
   5. They will attend and participate in the training programs and monthly training.
   6. Alternates will re-certify on all individual skills and must maintain acceptable standards of performance as delineated in ERT qualification.
3. **OPERATIONS** (TBP: 8.05)
   1. When the team is activated for an operation, the ERT supervisor, or the acting supervisor, reports directly to the Chief of Police or to the incident commander where one has been designated, or to the on-scene supervisor.
   2. The ERT supervisor is responsible for deployment of the ERT, tactical decision-making, and tactical resolution of the incident.
   3. The ERT supervisor is subordinate to the incident commander in terms of when and if a tactical option will be initiated, but not how it will be performed.
   4. Unless the ERT supervisor 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.
   5. The primary negotiator will manage the negotiations process.
   6. The negotiations unit will work under the direction of the ERT supervisor.
   7. Requests or demands received from the suspect through the negotiator may be approved or denied by the ERT supervisor.
   8. It is the policy of this department not to allow face-to-face negotiations with a subject suspected of posing a danger to others. A negotiator who must work on the inner perimeter will be armed at all times and shall wear the appropriate body armor. Negotiators will not enter the inner perimeter without specific instructions from the ERT supervisor.
   9. 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.

* 1. Tactical medics will be provided protective armor and other uniform accessories but will not be armed unless they are also a licensed peace officer.
  2. Tactical Medics will not enter a structure with the entry team but will maintain availability near the entry point and shall enter only on the orders of the entry team after a structure is secure or when an injured officer is in a position of safety.

(Standard 8.06 requires that agencies issue minimum Self Aid/Buddy Aid equipment to all officers on an ERT. This requirement can be met by providing for a paramedic level or M.D. as a part of the entry team on all hazardous entries. If the paramedic or M.D. is part of the actual entry team, this section will need to be modified to state that. Agencies are encouraged to provide minimum self-aid / buddy-aid equipment to all ERT officers even though a paramedic or M.D. is part of the team.)

* 1. During deployment, the tactical medics will report to the ERT supervisor.

1. **ACTIVATION PROCESS** (TBP: 8.05)
   1. Each shift commander has the authority to immediately activate the team for any critical or unusual police incident within the jurisdictional boundaries.
   2. Shift commanders will advise communications of the situation and the need for the ERT. Communications will contact the ERT supervisor and provide the contact number for the shift supervisor.
   3. 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 supervisor with the request. If the ERT commander approves the request, the team will be activated.

1. **SELECTION PROCESS** 
   1. ERT Members (TBP: 8.04)
      1. Assignment to the ERT will be on a voluntary basis and will consist of sworn personnel with the exception of tactical medics, who are members of the fire department. ERT members will be selected from a roster created through applicant testing. The Chief of Police, the ERT supervisor, and existing team members may designate special requirements for selection of personnel.
      2. All ERT members must exhibit a sound mental and physical condition.
      3. Criteria for applications will consist of the following:
         1. A minimum of two years of active law-enforcement experience with the department.
         2. A physical agility test consisting of the following:
            1. A minimum score of 85% on the firearms qualification course (FQC).
            2. Completion of the ERT obstacle course in a maximum of 3.5 minutes.
            3. Running 1.5 miles in a maximum time of 15 minutes.
            4. Bench press 85% of the applicant’s body weight.
            5. Pass a comprehensive background investigation that assesses the applicant’s potential performance and mental suitability for ERT assignment.
         3. Participate in a verbal interview conducted by the ERT supervisor and a board appointed by the Chief of Police.
         4. 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. All agencies should make sure that the qualifications identified in this policy are directly related to the job duties of an ERT member and that this policy (as with all policies) are approved by your local attorney.
   2. Hostage Negotiators: (TBP: 8.03)
      1. Hostage negotiators are a part of the ERT but perform only hostage negotiation duties. The negotiation team members will be on call, and will perform negotiator duties in addition to their regular duty assignments.
      2. Minimum qualifications:
         1. Three years or more as an officer with the department
         2. TCOLE mental health officer certificate
         3. TCOLE crisis intervention training
         4. Basic hostage negotiator school
         5. Bi-lingual
      3. When an opening for a negotiator occurs, the ERT supervisor 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.
      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.
      6. Upon selection, the new hostage negotiator must pass a psychological screening for the position.
   3. Tactical Medic

Selected paramedics from the fire department will be assigned to the (ERT). The Chief of Police and Fire Chief will make the selections.

1. **RE-QUALIFICATION AND REMOVAL FROM THE TEAM**
   1. ERT officers must pass a re-qualification physical agility test annually.
   2. 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 supervisor.
   3. Failure to meet the minimum acceptable standard within the designated period of time will result in removal from the team.
   4. A team member may be removed from the team, without cause, when that is deemed necessary for the good of the team by a consensus of the team with approval by the Chief of Police.
   5. Being placed in a temporary, non-deployment status three times may result in removal from the team.

1. **RESIGNATIONS AND FILLING VACANCIES**
   1. A team member may voluntarily withdraw from the team at any time, for any reason.
   2. Team members leaving ERT will not be eligible to reapply to ERT for a period of two years.
   3. With the permission of the Chief of Police, a member who leaves ERT may be allowed to remain as an alternate.
   4. When a vacancy on the team occurs, any officer meeting the above qualifications may apply. ERT alternates will be considered to have preferred qualifications, but will not automatically be chosen above other qualified candidates.
   5. 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.
2. **TRAINING STANDARDS**
   1. ERT Team Training (TBP: 3.10)
      1. The ERT and alternates will conduct training a minimum of 16 hours per month. They will train on appropriate subjects related to the mission of the ERT.
      2. All training will be documented, and training records will be maintained on file in the 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.
   2. Hostage Negotiation Training (TBP: 3.11)
      1. Training is essential to the success of hostage negotiates. 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:
         1. Prior to assignment, a hostage negotiator must receive specialized training as a negotiator in crisis interactions. Negotiation team members must have attended and passed the basic 40-hour hostage negotiation school. Within the first two years, hostage negotiators should attend the Advanced Hostage Negotiation School.
         2. Every year, negotiators should complete at least 16 hours of in-service training related to hostage negotiations to enhance their communication skills and negotiation strategies.
         3. Failure to attend training requirements may result in removal from the hostage negotiation Team.
3. **EQUIPMENT STANDARDS**
   1. The ERT will supply their team members with the following safety equipment:
      1. Ballistic helmet
      2. Safety glasses and goggles
      3. Hearing protection
      4. Complete coverage ballistic entry 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 or microphone
      9. Chemical agent mask
      10. Utility uniform of color and pattern consistent with the area of operation
      11. Self-aid / buddy aid kit
   2. ERT members will wear appropriate utility type uniforms and footwear of an approved color/pattern.
   3. 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 supervisor must approve all other items of personal wear or equipment.
   4. 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 supervisor will conduct a documented inspection of all ERT members’ assigned equipment for operational readiness.
4. **SPECIAL EQUIPMENT**
   1. 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, stopping power, and the ability to sustain fire.
      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 annually.
      4. ERT members are authorized to carry assigned weapons in their vehicle on a daily basis at the discretion of the ERT supervisor. The weapon will be secured in the trunk of the vehicle with a locking device. Such a weapon is never left in the interior space of a vehicle.
      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 supervisor 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.
   2. ERT Van
      1. The purpose of the ERT van is to transport equipment and personnel to the scene of an ERT incident. The ERT van may also be used as a mobile command post.
      2. The ERT van may be driven on out-of-town ERT calls, training, or demonstrations as approved by the Chief.
      3. The ERT van may only be used by ERT members.
      4. Use of the ERT van must be approved by the ERT supervisor. Use is automatically approved during an ERT call-up.
      5. The ERT supervisor will designate one or more members of the ERT as drivers, and provide documented training in the operation of the ERT van. Only designated ERT members may drive the ERT van.
      6. The ERT supervisor will designate one driver to be responsible for the maintenance of the ERT van. This driver is responsible for documenting, in writing, monthly inspections of the ERT van and equipment stored in the ERT van.
      7. The ERT supervisor will post in the ERT van a list of equipment stored in the ERT van.
      8. The ERT supervisor will post in the ERT van a list of ERT officers who are authorized to drive the ERT van.
5. **AFTER ACTION CRITIQUE**
   1. At the completion of all operations and significant training events the ERT supervisor will conduct an after-action review.
   2. The purpose of this review will be to create a forum for team members to offer information for the improvement of the team.
   3. After-action report requirements are discussed in Policy 8.1, Unusual Occurrences.

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