

**RACINE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
POLICY & PROCEDURE**

SUBJECT: Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team		PROCEDURE: 800.100	
DATE ISSUED: 12/04/13	EFFECTIVE DATE: same	CANCELS: 235.175	PAGE: 1 OF 6

**PURPOSE:** To establish the governing regulations in the selection, training, equipping and use of the Racine County Sheriff's Office Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team.

### 1. MISSION

The presence of a highly trained, highly skilled law enforcement tactical unit has been shown to substantially reduce the risk of injury or loss of life to citizens, law enforcement personnel and suspects. Recognizing that a well coordinated team response to critical incidents increases the potential of successful resolutions of critical incidents, it is the intent of the Racine County Sheriff's Office SWAT Team to provide a highly trained and skilled tactical team as a resource for the agency. The mission of the Racine County Sheriff's Office SWAT Team is to support the Sheriff's Office and any other requesting law enforcement agency with a tactical response to critical incidents. Critical incidents are defined as:

1. Hostage Situations: The holding of any person(s) against their will by an armed or potentially armed suspect.
2. Barricade Situations: The standoff created by an armed or potentially armed suspect in any location, whether fortified or not, who is refusing to comply with demands for surrender.
3. High Risk Apprehensions: The arrest or apprehension of armed or potentially armed suspect(s) where there is a likelihood of resistance.
4. High Risk Warrant Service: The service of search or arrest warrants where there is a likelihood of armed or potentially armed suspects and the potential for resistance.
5. Terrorist Incidents: The calculated use of violence (or the threat of violence) against civilians in order to attain goals that are political, religious, or ideological in nature.
6. Special Assignments: Any assignment, approved by the Sheriff or his designee, based upon the threat level or need for special expertise.

### 2. COMPOSITION

The SWAT Team is composed of sworn personnel appointed by the Sheriff. The size of the team will be maintained at a level that ensures an adequate number of SWAT personnel are available to complete any and all duties they may be assigned.

### 3. COMMAND AND CONTROL STRUCTURE

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The SWAT Team is commanded by an officer in charge (OIC), who is appointed by the Sheriff. The OIC will be supported by several Team Leaders (TL) and Assistant Team Leaders (ATL) who will be selected by the OIC. All of these individuals will be appointed from the ranks of active SWAT Team members.

When activated for an operation the SWAT OIC or designee reports directly to the Incident Commander or on-scene supervisor. The SWAT Team commander is responsible for the deployment of the SWAT Team, tactical decision making and tactical resolution of the incident. The SWAT Team commander is subordinate to the Incident Commander in terms of if and when any tactical option will be initiated, not how it will be performed. Unless the SWAT Team commander relinquishes his control to another person outside the SWAT Team, no other person, who is not in a leadership position within the SWAT Team, will attempt to direct, supervise or control any element or member of the SWAT Team.

#### 5. SWAT TEAM ACTIVATION

Due to the rapidly evolving, dynamic nature of critical incidents and the response time needed to deploy tactical team members and equipment, the activation of the SWAT Team must be initiated in a highly efficient manner. Upon identifying a situation as a critical incident, the on duty shift commander shall notify the SWAT OIC or designee, who will evaluate the situation. If a response by RASO SWAT is deemed to be necessary, the shift commander will notify the Operations Captain, Chief Deputy, or the Sheriff and request activation of the SWAT Team. In the event that these command staff members are unavailable, the shift commander has the authority to activate the team. This activation and notification will be coordinated by the SWAT OIC or designee and the Racine County Communications Center.

Requests to deploy the SWAT Team that are proactive or anticipatory in nature (search/arrest warrants, etc.) will be forwarded to the SWAT OIC for review. If circumstances indicate that the use of the SWAT Team is reasonable, the SWAT OIC will contact the Operations Captain, Chief Deputy, or the Sheriff to request the team be activated.

Activation of the tactical team results in the initiation of a tactical team assignment. The team's operation will be the responsibility of the team commander with the maxim being that the team is responsible for the tactics used to accomplish the mission. Upon completion of that mission, the incident will revert back to the division or agency that initiated the call-out for reports and follow-up investigation.

A call-out for the SWAT Team will include all available team members. Only the SWAT OIC, designee or command staff member can authorize the activation of a limited number of team members.

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## 5. SELECTION PROCESS

The Racine County Sheriff's Office SWAT Team will select members from a valid selection list created through application and testing. Criteria for selection will be based on:

- a. Time in service
- b. Satisfactory performance in present and previous job assignments
- c. Satisfactory physical fitness levels
- d. Satisfactory performance in law enforcement skills

Testing will consist of SWAT specific and validated skills. Team recommendations will be forwarded to the Sheriff for approval. Once appointed, all operational team members, regardless of rank or position, must maintain acceptable standards of performance. A team member may voluntarily withdraw from the team at any time, for any reason. A team member may be removed from the team, without cause, when deemed necessary for the good of the team, by a consensus of the team leadership and approval of the Sheriff.

## 6. TRAINING STANDARDS

The SWAT Team will conduct a reasonable amount of training each month to maintain proficiency in the tactics and equipment that are utilized by the team. Team training will be performance oriented and SWAT Team task specific. Failure to meet minimum skill competency levels will result in remedial training. Continued failure to meet minimum skill competency levels will be dealt with as a failure to meet minimum standards.

## 7. EQUIPMENT STANDARD

The RASO Swat Team will provide team members with at least the following safety equipment:

1. Ballistic Helmet
2. Complete coverage ballistic vest with Level III/IV inserts
3. Special weapons as authorized
4. Ammunition for training/qualification
5. Communications devices

SWAT Team members to whom any item of equipment is issued, are responsible for the care and maintenance of the equipment. Failure to maintain the equipment in full mission readiness will be viewed as a failure to meet minimum standards and may result in agency discipline.

## 8. SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

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Recognizing that the missions of the RASO SWAT Team are performed in a hazardous environment, and that the safety of innocent citizens, officers and suspects is often jeopardized by the hazardous conditions, it shall be the intent of the RASO SWAT Team to utilize special equipment, as listed below, in an attempt to reduce the risk of injury or death to all involved during the performance of a SWAT operation. Several of these items are regularly deployed throughout the various divisions of the Sheriff's Office so as to make them more readily available for use by trained personnel in accordance with agency policy. THE RACINE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE RECOGNIZES THAT THE USE OF THE SPECIAL EQUIPMENT IN NO WAY IMPLIES OR GUARANTEES THAT INJURY OR DEATH WILL NOT OCCUR DURING A SWAT OPERATION.

1. Primary entry weapons: a short barreled weapon (rifle, shotgun or submachine gun) which enables the team member to acquire rapid target acquisition, enhances high levels of accuracy, and provides maneuverability, reliability, ballistic effectiveness and sustained fire capability.
2. Precision rifles: these weapons allow team members to place highly accurate rounds where needed to help resolve life threatening incidents.
3. Chemical agents: chemical projectiles and grenades, such as CS and OC, used to dislodge barricaded subjects or as a response to active resistance or its threat. OC spray, used as per RASO policy by trained agency personnel, is not considered a special weapon.
4. Less Lethal weapons or ammunition: weapons or ammunition, which propel a projectile or device that is not normally lethal in nature. These are designed to offer an alternative to the use of deadly force when appropriate. Less Lethal 12 gauge flexible baton rounds used per RASO policy by trained agency personnel are not considered a special weapon. The Taser X26 ECD is designed to use Neuromuscular Incapacitation (NMI) to control subject and/or protect officers as an alternative to deadly force when appropriate. The Taser X26 ECD used per RASO policy by trained agency personnel is not considered as a special weapon.
5. Ballistic shields: used to protect SWAT Team members from firearms threats.
6. Noise/Flash Diversionary Devices: designed to save lives and reduce the potential for injury by providing a diversion for SWAT Team members operating in a hazardous area. Utilizes a bright flash of light followed immediately by a loud noise.
7. Breaching Tools, ammunitions, and explosives: items such as rams, pry bars, saws, hydraulic machines, special frangible shotgun rounds, and specially designed explosive charges designed to force entry into barricaded or secured areas. Breaching equipment deployed in RASO marked and unmarked squads by trained personnel is not considered special equipment.
8. Technology Surveillance Equipment

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9. Due to constantly evolving technology and tactics, special equipment not on this list may be added to the Team's inventory at the discretion of the SWAT OIC and senior command staff.

The SWAT OIC will ensure that only those team members property trained and qualified in the use of special equipment will utilize the equipment.

#### 9. MISSION PLANNING

The RASO SWAT Team will utilize a written planning process for all operations that are proactive or anticipatory in nature, such as warrant service. The written process will document how the operation is to be conducted including:

1. Command
2. Control
3. Communications
4. Support required

The operations plan will include all planning or decision making documents.

#### 10. DOCUMENTATION

The SWAT Team OIC will ensure that an RASO incident report will be generated detailing the activation and use of the team.

#### 11. AFTER ACTION DEBRIEF

At the completion of all operations and significant training events the SWAT Team OIC will conduct a debriefing. The purpose of this review will be to create a forum for team members to offer information for the improvement of the team. The debriefing will be formatted to develop the following information:

- a. positive factors
- b. negative factors
- c. solutions for the negative factors

#### 12. PERIODIC POLICY REVIEW

The SWAT Team OIC will regularly review this policy and, when necessary, submit recommendations for updates to the Operations Captain.

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