

# Critical Incident Response Team

## 408.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) is comprised of two specialized teams: the Crisis Negotiation Team (CNT) and the Special Weapons And Tactics (SWAT) Team. The Critical Incident Response Team 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 appear to be necessary. This policy is written to comply with the guidelines established in the Attorney General's Commission on Special Weapons and Tactics Report (September 2002) and the POST 2005 SWAT Operational Guidelines and Standardized Training Recommendations (Penal Code § 13514.1).

### 408.1.1 OPERATIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

The Policy Manual sections pertaining to the Critical Incident Response Team are divided into Administrative and Operational Policies and Procedures. Since situations that necessitate the need for such a police response vary greatly from incident to incident and such events often demand on-the-scene evaluation, the Operational Policy outlined in this manual 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

A Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT), sometimes referred to as SWAT, is 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 including, but 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 LEVELS OF CAPABILITY/TRAINING

### 408.2.1 LEVEL I

A level I SWAT team is a basic team capable of providing containment and intervention with critical incidents that exceed the training and resources available to line-level officers. This does not include ad hoc teams of officers that are formed around a specific mission, detail or incident (e.g. active shooter response). Generally 5% of the basic team's on-duty time should be devoted to training.

### 408.2.2 LEVEL II

A level II, Intermediate level SWAT team is capable of providing containment and intervention. Additionally, these teams possess tactical capabilities above the Level I teams. These teams may or may not work together on a daily basis, but are intended to respond to incidents as a team. At

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least 5% of their on-duty time should be devoted to training with supplemental training for tactical capabilities above the Level I team.

#### 408.2.3 LEVEL III

A Level III, Advanced level SWAT team is a SWAT team whose personnel function as a full-time unit. Generally 25% of their on-duty time is devoted to training. Level III teams operate in accordance with contemporary best practices. Such units possess both skills and equipment to utilize tactics beyond the capabilities of Level I and Level II teams.

#### **408.3 POLICY**

It shall be the policy of this department to maintain a Level II SWAT team (CIRT) and to provide the equipment, staffing, and training necessary to maintain such a team. The CIRT unit should develop sufficient resources to perform three basic operational functions:

- (a) Command and Control
- (b) Containment
- (c) Entry/Apprehension/Rescue

It is understood 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 CIRT missions and operations appropriate to this department. The assessment should consider the team's capabilities and limitations and should be reviewed annually by the CIRT Commander or his/her designee.

#### 408.3.2 ORGANIZATIONAL PROCEDURES

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

- (a) Locally identified specific missions the team is capable of performing.
- (b) Team organization and function.
- (c) Personnel selection and retention criteria.
- (d) Training and required competencies.
- (e) Procedures for activation and deployment.
- (f) Command and control issues, including a clearly defined command structure.
- (g) Multi-agency response.
- (h) Out-of-jurisdiction response.

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- (i) Specialized functions and supporting resources.

### 408.3.3 OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

This department shall develop a separate written set of operational procedures (CIRT Manual) in accordance with the determination of their level of capability, using sound risk reduction practices. The operational procedures should be patterned after the National Tactical Officers Association Suggested SWAT Best Practices. Because such procedures are specific to CIRT members and will outline tactical and officer safety issues, they are not included within this policy. The operational procedures should include, at minimum, the following:

- (a) Designated personnel responsible for developing an operational or tactical plan prior to, and/or during SWAT operations (time permitting).
  - 1. All CIRT members should have an understanding of operational planning.
  - 2. CIRT training should consider planning for both spontaneous and planned events.
  - 3. CIRT should incorporate medical emergency contingency planning as part of the SWAT operational plan.
- (b) Plans for mission briefings conducted prior to an operation, unless circumstances require immediate deployment.
  - 1. When possible, briefings should include the specialized units and supporting resources.
- (c) Protocols for a sustained operation should be developed which may include relief, rotation of personnel and augmentation of resources.
- (d) A generic checklist to be worked through prior to initiating a tactical action as a means of conducting a threat assessment to determine the appropriate response and resources necessary, including the use of CIRT.
- (e) The appropriate role for a trained negotiator.
- (f) A standard method of determining whether or not a warrant should be regarded as high-risk.
- (g) 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.
- (h) Post incident scene management including:
  - 1. Documentation of the incident.
  - 2. Transition to investigations and/or other units.
  - 3. Debriefing after every deployment of the SWAT team.

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- (a) After-action team debriefing provides evaluation and analysis of critical incidents and affords the opportunity for individual and team assessments, helps to identify training needs, and reinforces sound risk management practices.
  - (b) Such debriefing should not be conducted until involved officers have had the opportunity to individually complete necessary reports or provide formal statements.
  - (c) In order to maintain candor and a meaningful exchange, debriefing will generally not be recorded.
  - (d) When appropriate, debriefing should include specialized units and resources.
- (i) Sound risk management analysis.
  - (j) Standardization of equipment deployed.

### **408.4 TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

The CIRT Commander shall conduct an annual SWAT Training needs assessment to ensure that training is conducted within team capabilities, department policy and the training guidelines as established by POST (11 C.C.R. § 1084).

#### **408.4.1 INITIAL TRAINING**

SWAT operators and SWAT team leaders should not be deployed until successful completion of the POST-certified Basic SWAT Course or its equivalent.

- (a) To avoid unnecessary or redundant training, previous training completed by members may be considered equivalent when the hours and content (topics) meet or exceed department requirements or POST standardized training recommendations.

#### **408.4.2 UPDATED TRAINING**

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

Critical Incident Response Team operators and CIRT supervisors/team leaders should complete update or refresher training as certified by POST, or its equivalent, every 24 months.

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

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

Command personnel who may assume incident command responsibilities should attend a SWAT or Critical Incident Commander course or their equivalent. CIRT command personnel should attend a POST-certified SWAT commander or tactical commander course, or its equivalent.

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#### 408.4.4 SWAT ONGOING TRAINING

Training shall be coordinated by the CIRT Commander. The CIRT 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:

- (a) Each SWAT member shall perform a physical fitness test twice each year. A minimum qualifying score must be attained by each team member.
- (b) Any SWAT team member failing to attain the minimum physical fitness qualification score will be notified of the requirement to retest and attain a qualifying score. 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.
- (c) Those members who are on vacation, ill, or are on light duty status with a doctor'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.
- (d) Quarterly, 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 that officer to seek remedial training from a team range master approved by the CIRT Commander. 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.
- (e) Each SWAT team member shall complete the quarterly SWAT qualification course for any specialty weapon issued to, or used by, the team member during SWAT operations. Failure to qualify will require the team member to seek remedial training from the Rangemaster who has been approved by the CIRT 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

CIRT units 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.

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#### 408.4.7 TRAINING DOCUMENTATION

Individual and team training shall be documented and records maintained by the Personnel and Training Unit. Such documentation shall be maintained in each member's individual training file. Team training shall be documented and records maintained by the CIRT Commander.

#### **408.5 UNIFORMS, EQUIPMENT, AND FIREARMS**

##### 408.5.1 UNIFORMS

CIRT units from this agency 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 agency (CIRT) should be adequately equipped to meet the specific mission(s) identified by the agency.

The SWAT Team maintains two (2) specialized response vehicles equipped for exclusive use by the SWAT Team.

1. Special Response Rescue Vehicle - B.A.T.T. (Ballistic Armored Tactical Transport): A four-wheel drive armored vehicle built on a Ford F-550 Super-Duty chasis and powered by a 6.8L V-10 gas engine. The vehicle is equipped to carry specialized equipment and for emergency operations response (emergency lighting, sirens, radios). It is stored within the Administration Building parking compound.

The Special Response Rescue Vehicle is to be utilized in high-risk operations or incidents in which it will increase the safety of the officers or general public. Permission to utilize the vehicle will come from the CIRT Commander during SWAT Operations or a Supervisor in high-risk incidents falling outside the scope of a CIRT Operation.

2. Passenger Van – Utilized to transport Team members to operation sites and equipped to carry specialized equipment. The vehicle is stored within the Administration Building parking compound.

Team Leaders shall assign to team members the specific responsibility of routine, weekly checks of the vehicles to ensure security, operational capability and periodic service needs.

##### 408.5.3 FIREARMS

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

Members of the Department assigned to the SWAT team are issued a Glock 17, 9mm handgun. All members assigned to the SWAT team shall carry this handgun during SWAT operations. SWAT team members may also carry this handgun while working their primary assignment.

When SWAT team members leave the team, they will return their assigned handgun.

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#### 408.5.4 OPERATIONAL READINESS INSPECTIONS

The CIRT Commander may appoint a supervisor to perform operational readiness inspections of all unit equipment at least quarterly. The result of the inspection will be forwarded to the CIRT Commander in writing. The inspection will include personal equipment issued to members of the unit, operational equipment and equipment maintained or used in CIRT vehicles.

#### **408.6 MANAGEMENT/SUPERVISION OF CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE TEAM**

The Commander of the CIRT shall be selected by the Chief of Police upon recommendation of staff.

##### 408.6.1 PRIMARY UNIT MANAGER

Under the direction of the Chief of Police, through the Operations Bureau Commander, the Critical Incident Response Team shall be managed by a lieutenant.

##### 408.6.2 TEAM SUPERVISORS

The Crisis Negotiation Team and each SWAT Team should be supervised by a sergeant. Senior officers may be assigned as team leaders by the CIRT Commander.

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

The following represent the team leader's responsibilities for the Critical Incident Response Team.

- (a) The Crisis Negotiation Team leader's primary responsibility is to supervise the operations of the Crisis Negotiation Team which will include deployment, training, first line participation, and other duties as directed by the CIRT Commander.
- (b) The SWAT Team leader's primary responsibility is to supervise the operations of the SWAT Team, which will include deployment, training, first line participation, and other duties as directed by the CIRT Commander.

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

The Crisis Negotiation Team 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 Critical Incident Response Team.

##### 408.7.1 SELECTION OF PERSONNEL

Interested sworn personnel, with a minimum of one year of service, shall submit a memorandum of interest to the CIRT Commander. Qualified applicants will then be invited to an oral interview. The oral board will consist of the CIRT Commander, the Crisis Negotiation Team supervisor, and a third person to be selected by the two. Interested personnel shall be evaluated by the following criteria:

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- (a) Recognized competence and ability as evidenced by performance.
- (b) Demonstrated good judgment and understanding of critical role of negotiator and negotiation process.
- (c) Effective communication skills to ensure success as a negotiator.
- (d) Special skills, training, or appropriate education as it pertains to the assignment.
- (e) 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 staff for final selection.

### 408.7.2 TRAINING OF NEGOTIATORS

Those officers selected as members of the Crisis Negotiation Team should attend the Basic Negotiators Course as approved by the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) prior to primary use in an actual crisis situation. Untrained officers may be used in a support or training capacity. Additional training will be coordinated by the team leader.

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

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 leader. Performance and efficiency levels, established by the team leader, will be met and maintained by all team members, including a 'Meets Standards' performance evaluation. Any member of the Crisis Negotiation Team 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 which may be deployed during events requiring specialized tactics in such situations as cases where suspects have taken hostages and/or barricaded themselves as well as prolonged or predictable situations in which persons armed or suspected of being armed pose a danger to themselves or others.

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

#### 408.8.1 SELECTION OF PERSONNEL

Interested sworn personnel, with a minimum of one year of service, shall submit a memorandum of interest to the CIRT Commander. 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 CIRT Commander. The testing process will consist of an oral board, physical agility test, and Basic SWAT handgun/rifle course.



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- (a) Oral board - The oral board will consist of personnel selected by the CIRT Commander. Applicants will be evaluated by the following criteria:
  - 1. Recognized competence and ability as evidenced by performance;
  - 2. Demonstrated good judgment and understanding of critical role of SWAT member;
  - 3. Special skills, training, or appropriate education as it pertains to this assignment; and,
  - 4. Commitment to the unit, realizing that the additional assignment may necessitate unusual working hours, conditions, and training obligations.
- (b) Physical agility - The physical agility test is designed to determine the physical capabilities of the applicant as it relates to performance of SWAT-related duties. The test and scoring procedure will be established by the CIRT Commander. A minimum qualifying score shall be attained by the applicant to be considered for the position.
- (c) SWAT basic handgun/rifle course - Candidates will be invited to shoot the SWAT Basic Drill for the handgun and rifle. A minimum qualifying score must be attained to qualify.
- (d) A list of successful applicants shall be submitted to staff, by the CIRT Commander, 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 CIRT Commander. The performance and efficiency level, as established by the team leader, will be met and maintained by all SWAT Team members. Any member of SWAT who performs or functions at a level less than satisfactory shall be subject to dismissal from the team.

#### **408.9 OPERATION GUIDELINES FOR CRISIS RESPONSE UNIT**

The following procedures serve as guidelines for the operational deployment of the Critical Incident Response Team. Generally, the SWAT Team and the Crisis Negotiation Team will be activated together. It is recognized, however, that a SWAT Team may be used in a situation not requiring the physical presence of the Crisis Negotiation Team such as warrant service operations. This shall be at the discretion of the CIRT Commander.

##### 408.9.1 ON-SCENE DETERMINATION

The supervisor in charge on the scene of a particular event will assess whether the Critical Incident Response Team is to respond to the scene. Upon final determination by the Watch Commander, he/she will notify the CIRT Commander.

##### 408.9.2 APPROPRIATE SITUATIONS FOR USE OF CRISIS RESPONSE UNIT

The following are examples of incidents which may result in the activation of the Critical Incident Response Team:

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- (a) Barricaded suspects who refuse an order to surrender.
- (b) Incidents where hostages are taken.
- (c) Cases of suicide threats.
- (d) Arrests of dangerous persons.
- (e) Any situation that 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 Bureau Commander. Deployment of the Alameda Police Department Critical Incident Response Team in response to requests by other agencies must be authorized by a Bureau Commander.

#### 408.9.4 MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL SWAT OPERATIONS

The CIRT unit, including relevant specialized units and supporting resources, should develop protocols, agreements, MOU's, or working relationships to support multi-jurisdictional or regional responses.

- (a) If it is anticipated that multi-jurisdictional SWAT operations will regularly be conducted; SWAT multi-agency and multi-disciplinary joint training exercises are encouraged.
- (b) Members of the Alameda Police Department CIRT unit shall operate under the policies, procedures and command of the Alameda Police Department when working in a multi-agency situation.

#### 408.9.5 MOBILIZATION OF CRISIS RESPONSE UNIT

The On-Scene supervisor shall make a request to the Watch Commander for the Critical Incident Response Team. The Watch Commander shall then notify the CIRT Commander and Bureau Commander. If unavailable, a team leader shall be notified. A current mobilization list shall be maintained in the Communication Center by the CIRT Commander.

The Watch Commander should advise the CIRT Commander with as much of the following information which is available at the time:

- (a) The number of suspects, known weapons and resources.
- (b) If the suspect is in control of hostages.
- (c) If the suspect is barricaded.
- (d) The type of crime involved.
- (e) If the suspect has threatened or attempted suicide.
- (f) The location of the command post and a safe approach to it.
- (g) The extent of any perimeter and the number of officers involved.

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- (h) Any other important facts critical to the immediate situation and whether the suspect has refused an order to surrender.

The CIRT Commander or team leader shall then call selected officers to respond.

### 408.9.6 FIELD UNIT RESPONSIBILITIES

While waiting for the Critical Incident Response Team, field personnel should, if safe, practical and sufficient resources exist:

- (a) Establish an inner and outer perimeter.
- (b) Establish a command post outside of the inner perimeter.
- (c) Establish an arrest/response team. The team actions may include:
  - 1. Securing any subject or suspect who may surrender.
  - 2. Taking action to mitigate a deadly threat or behavior.
- (d) Evacuate any injured persons or citizens in the zone of danger.
- (e) Attempt to establish preliminary communication with the suspect. Once CIRT has arrived, all negotiations should generally be halted to allow the Crisis Negotiators and SWAT time to set up.
- (f) Be prepared to brief the CIRT Commander on the situation.
- (g) Plan for, and stage, anticipated resources.

### 408.9.7 ON-SCENE COMMAND RESPONSIBILITIES

Upon arrival of the Critical Incident Response Team at the scene, the Incident Commander shall brief the CIRT Commander and team leaders about the situation. Upon review, it will be the Incident Commander's decision, with input from the CIRT Commander, whether to deploy the Critical Incident Response Team. Once the Incident Commander authorizes deployment, the CIRT Commander 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 Critical Incident Response Team. The Incident Commander and the CIRT Commander (or his or her designee) shall maintain communications at all times.

### 408.9.8 COMMUNICATION WITH CRISIS RESPONSE UNIT PERSONNEL

All of those persons who are non-CIRT personnel should refrain from any non-emergency contact or interference with any member of the unit during active negotiations. Operations require the utmost in concentration by involved personnel and, as a result, no one should interrupt or communicate with Critical Incident Response Team personnel directly. All non-emergency communications shall be channeled through the Crisis Negotiation Team Leader or his or her designee.