Cobb County Police Department

Policy 4.03

SPECIAL TEAMS

Effective Date: October 1, 2019	**Issued By:** Chief C.T. Cox
Rescinds: Policy 4.03 (November 1, 2017)	**Page 1 of 6**
The words "he, his, him," which may appear in this policy, are used generically for clarity and ease of reading. These terms are not meant to imply gender and relate to all employees of the Department.	

The purpose of this policy is to establish the minimum guidelines for special teams to include their response to critical incidents.

I. CONTACT INFORMATION

Each Special Team Commander will be responsible for ensuring the Communications Center has a current list of the names and contact numbers for their team.

- Special Weapons and Tactics Team
- Crisis Negotiation Team
- Bomb Squad
- Underwater Search and Recovery Team
- Mobile Field Force
- Canine Unit

II. REPONSE TO INCIDENTS

A. Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team

When a SWAT Team response is requested, the following procedures should be followed:

1. The first SWAT Team member on the scene will assess the situation and act as SWAT Team Leader until relieved by a senior team member.

2. The first SWAT Team supervisor to arrive on the scene will assume command of the SWAT Team operation and remain in charge until relieved by a SWAT member of a senior grade.

3. The on-scene SWAT Team Leader will:

    a. Assign SWAT personnel to relieve patrol officers and detectives from inner perimeter positions.

    b. Appoint SWAT Squad Leaders as necessary and assign other team members as required for the situation.

c. Evaluate the need for additional equipment or manpower. No additional personnel or equipment should be called out without his approval.

d. Provide security to negotiators as needed.

4. Once the SWAT Team has taken over an inner perimeter, begun an assault, or any other active function of imminent danger, all other personnel in the immediate area of that function will follow instructions of any SWAT Team member, regardless of rank.

5. The SWAT Team Leader will discuss viable options to resolve the crisis situation with the Crisis Negotiations Team Leader and the On-Scene Commander. The ultimate decision will be made by the On-Scene Commander.

6. Once a decision to tactically resolve a situation is made, the final option of which tactical plan to use will rest upon the SWAT Team Leader, based upon his intelligence data, experience, the suspect, weapons involved, actual or potential hostages, and location. This option will include an appropriate arrest plan and/or decision to have other emergency personnel (i.e. Emergency Medical Technicians and Fire Personnel) standing by.

7. The decision to call on other jurisdictions for SWAT assistance shall be made by the SWAT Team Commander and the On-Scene Commander.

   a. If the SWAT Team Commander is on the way to the incident, but not actually at the scene, and believes that additional assistance should be requested, he should relay this request to the On-Scene Commander. The On-Scene Commander, using information provided by the Communications Center and the justification of the SWAT Team Commander, will then make the decision.

   b. If the SWAT Team Commander is on the scene prior to the arrival of the On-Scene Commander and, based on information gathered at the scene and from the Communications Center, believes additional assistance is required, he is authorized to request this assistance. The On-Scene Commander will be notified as soon as possible that the assistance has been requested.

8. Upon completion of a SWAT call-out, the SWAT personnel will conduct a sweep of the location held by the suspect prior to entry by investigators, negotiators, or any other person. SWAT Team members will then be directed to a specified location for debriefing.

B. Crisis Negotiation Team

1. Prior to beginning negotiations, the Team Leader (or negotiator) should be briefed by the On-Scene Commander.

2. Negotiators will use recognized and established methods and procedures to negotiate with persons involved in a critical incident.

3. No person other than the primary negotiator will attempt to negotiate, or otherwise interfere with negotiations, without the permission of the CNT Commander or Team Leader.

4. Once formal negotiations begin, no person will be allowed to negotiate without being a CNT member, or having the permission of the CNT Commander.

5. The negotiator(s) will keep the CNT Commander informed on the status of negotiations. The CNT Commander will keep the On-Scene Commander informed on the status of negotiations. In the absence of the CNT Commander, negotiators will report directly to the On-Scene Commander.

6. Upon completion of a negotiations incident, team members will conduct a debriefing. The Team Leader will be responsible for ensuring a synopsis of the situation is written. Any recordings of the negotiation should be entered into agency records in accordance with policy.

C. Bomb Squad

Bomb Squad technicians will be responsible for rendering safe, and the disposal/removal of explosive/hazardous devices and materials that come within their purview. A possible exception to this would be the discovery of military ordnance, which is the primary responsibility of the U.S. Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal. In such cases, the Bomb Squad may refer such incidents to the military for disposition as needed.

1. If the Bomb Squad responds reference a hazardous or destructive device or other Chemical, Biological, Radiological or Nuclear (CBRN) or other bomb/explosive related incident, Bomb Squad personnel will assume command of the scene until the danger from the situation is over, and they have completed their initial investigation and/or collection of evidence.

2. After a complete evaluation of the device and circumstances, the Bomb Squad technician should advise personnel at the scene what he intends to do and what safety precautions should be taken. The Bomb Squad technician will then proceed with actions necessary for the safe mitigation

of the hazardous situation. Bomb Squad technicians will be the final authority on any methods or procedures taken by the squad.

3. Only Bomb Squad technicians will handle or transport explosive materials, improvised explosive devices or any other potentially hazardous devices or materials.

4. Bomb Squad technicians may assist detectives, public safety personnel, or other responsible parties in an advisory capacity, on investigations related to explosives, destructive/hazardous devices or CBRN related incidents or any other situation where such expertise is required.

5. No explosive, or potentially explosive, device will be permitted inside any police installation, except in designated locations or explosives magazine.

   a. Explosive/hazardous devices and/or flammable chemicals will be transported only in Bomb Squad vehicles or containment vessel.

   b. Retail trade, low-grade fireworks are not included and may be transported by law enforcement personnel to the Evidence Unit.

D. Underwater Search and Recovery Team (USRT)

1. When requesting assistance from the USRT, the supervisor should provide the following information to the team leader so he may plan the response appropriately:

   - How many possible victims
   - Local weather conditions
   - Status of water to be searched (i.e. clear, muddy, contaminated, etc.)
   - Best approach route and any known nearby launching areas.

2. The supervisor or designee should keep all witnesses at the scene so that they can be interviewed by the divers when they arrive.

3. When USRT arrives, uniform officers should remain at the scene to assist with crowd control and securing the scene(s) as necessary.

4. The officer assigned the call should keep notes on the events at the scene. This officer will complete the report on the incident, and the USRT Team Commander or Leader will submit an addendum detailing only the USRT activities.

5. If required, an investigator from the appropriate detective unit will be called to the scene. Additionally, a member of the Law Enforcement Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, or a member of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will be called when necessary.

E. Mobile Field Force (MFF)

The MFF will be responsible for providing front line contact with protesters when riots or civil disorders become too large and/or violent for precinct personnel to handle. The MFF can be contacted to assist with both planned and unplanned events.

1. When requesting assistance from the MFF, the supervisor should provide the size and location(s) of the crowd so the MFF Commander may plan the response appropriately.

2. The MFF commander will designate a safe area for all members to meet. When the unit is assembled and all members are properly outfitted in personal protective equipment, the MFF will move as a unit to the trouble area as determined by the MFF Commander.

3. If a pre-planned protest or event is known by the department, the MFF may be called in and staged out of sight in case the event grows out of control or becomes violent.

4. The MFF Commander, assistant commander and squad leaders will have authority to make the decision to use crowd control agents or less than lethal munitions.

5. In the event protester devices are used and arrests are necessary, only individuals who have been certified to cut away these devices will be allowed to do so.

F. Canine Unit

Canine Unit response is covered under Policy 4.04 "Canine Unit."

III. REQUESTS FROM OTHER AGENCIES

Requests for Special Teams assistance by departments outside of Cobb County must be approved by a Deputy Chief, or higher authority.

IV. TRAINING AND READINESS EXERCISES

Periodic training and readiness exercises ensure that team members have an opportunity to practice their special skills and develop their abilities to function effectively as a team. Therefore, each special team is required to engage in periodic training and readiness exercises.

A. Generally, all team members will be required to attend. However, individual team commanders may excuse their personnel as appropriate.

B. Operational simulations will be included in the training and readiness exercises.

C. The Crisis Negotiation Team will be required to periodically conduct joint training exercises with the SWAT Team.

D. Each Special Team Commander (or his designee) is responsible for maintaining a record of all training and readiness exercises (to include a list of attendees) conducted by the Special Team. Individual employee training records will be updated according to policy.