

SWAT



OPERATOR I



North Carolina Justice Academy

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

About the NCJA	Section 1
NCJA Mission Statement	
NCJA Academic Integrity Statement	
Acknowledgement	Section 2
Instructor Biographies	
Course Schedule	Section 3
Course Orientation	Section 4
SWAT Operations Overview	Section 5
Firearms Use in Tactical Operations	Section 6
Tactical Entries, Clearing and Search Techniques	Section 7
Introduction to Distraction Devices	Section 8
Legal Issues for SWAT Operations	Section 9

ABOUT THE NORTH CAROLINA JUSTICE ACADEMY

The North Carolina Justice Academy is a division of the North Carolina Department of Justice. Created in 1973, the Academy offers training programs to criminal justice personnel, provides technical assistance to criminal justice agencies upon request, and develops and distributes educational and training materials.

The Academy's Training Division has a team of experienced and dedicated instructors-developers and administrative support staff tasked with the research and development of a wide variety of training. Working with the Training Division is a Support Division that operates a 20,000- volume library, a video production unit, a full-service print shop, a graphic arts department, an institutional research team, and housekeeping and maintenance services. It also manages the Academy's online registration and course delivery system, Acadis (<https://ncja-portal.acadisonline.com>).

The Academy has two campuses. The original campus in Salemburg has a long educational history. Established in 1875 as Salem Academy, the campus later became Pineland School for Girls, Pineland Junior College, Edwards Military Institute, and finally, Southwood College. There are eighteen classrooms, a 200,000 square-foot driving track, three outdoor firing ranges, a gymnasium, a cafeteria, three residence halls, the aforementioned library, and other practical exercise areas.

In September 1998, the Academy's second campus opened in Edneyville, on the site of the former Edneyville High School. It was named the Larry T. Justus Western Justice Academy in 2004 in honor of Representative Larry T. Justus. The campus has nine classrooms, a gymnasium, a cafeteria, a residence hall, and a state-of-the-art indoor firing range.

In 2017, the Western Regional Crime Laboratory in Asheville moved into a new \$15 million facility at the Edneyville campus. The crime lab performs blood-alcohol and toxicology tests, firearm analysis, DNA tests, and other services for western North Carolina law enforcement agencies.





North Carolina Justice Academy

Mission

To serve the citizens of North Carolina
by enhancing the careers of criminal justice
officers through research, education,
and training.

Statement of the North Carolina Justice Academy's Policy on Academic Integrity

The very nature of the Criminal Justice profession requires its members to possess and demonstrate accepted standards of integrity, including the area of academics. Therefore, the North Carolina Justice Academy has adopted a policy of academic integrity.

I. Definition

Violation of this policy is defined to include, but not limited to, the following activities:

- A. Cheating;
- B. Plagiarism;
- C. Falsification and/or fabrication;
- D. Abuse of academic materials;
- E. Complicity in academic dishonesty, and
- F. Personal misrepresentation.

II. Punishment

Violation of this policy shall result in corrective action up to and including dismissal from the course in which the student is currently enrolled, denial of enrollment in future courses, and notification of the student's employing agency.

When in doubt about what would constitute a potential violation, students should always discuss the matter with your instructor or course coordinator.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This manual would not have been possible without the valued input of the following committee members who have dedicated their time, service, and experience through commitment to the ongoing professional development of the SWAT I and II curriculum.

Your loyalty and dedication to a just and noble cause does not go unrecognized.

A.A. Boone

Training/SWAT Instructor/Raleigh PD Retired

Mitch Carter

Training/SWAT Instructor/Durham PD Retired

Blair Rockwell

Training/SWAT Commander /DoD SRT Ft Bragg

Chris Wiesemann

Training/Sniper Team Leader/Durham PD

Mark Ocepek

Training/Nassau County SRT/Fernandina Beach PD

Dave McDonald

Training/SWAT Team Leader/Raleigh PD

Floyd Yoder

Training Manager

North Carolina Justice Academy

INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHIES

Aaron Ligo

Instructor/Developer (SWAT, Patrol Rifle, Sniper)
North Carolina Justice Academy

Aaron Ligo served in the United States Marine Corps from 1990 to 1994. He began his law enforcement career with the Town of Carrboro Police Department, Carrboro NC, in 1995. In 2001, he began working for the Durham Police Department, Durham NC, in order to focus his career on the areas of Training and SWAT. From 2005, until his retirement in 2019, he served on the department's full time SWAT unit and filled specialty roles including Training Coordinator, Sniper, Rappel Master, and Explosive Breacher. He served as an Assistant Team Leader and as the Team Leader and retired from the law enforcement as a Sergeant on the unit.

In 1999, Mr. Ligo became certified as a Law Enforcement Instructor and has specialty certifications as a Subject Control and Arrest Techniques, Physical Fitness, and Firearms Instructor. His primary focus as an instructor is practical, tactical, and reality based training in the areas of firearms, defensive tactics, vehicle operations, rapid deployment, building searches, patrol response and SWAT specialty topics.

Chris Wieseemann

Adjunct Instructor (SWAT, Patrol Rifle, Sniper)
Master Officer, Durham Police Department

Chris Wieseemann has been a sworn law enforcement officer for over 20 years and spent 16 years assigned to a full time SWAT as both an Assaulter and as a Sniper and Sniper Team Leader. He has been a Specialized Firearms Instructor for over 15 years and holds instructor ratings in several disciplines including rifle, select fire weapon, and precision rifle. He competes at the national level in firearms competitions with single and multi-gun disciplines.

A. A. Boone

Adjunct Instructor (SWAT, Patrol Rifle)
Senior Officer (Ret.) Raleigh Police Department

A.A. Boone, retired from Raleigh Police Department where he spent 19 ½ years as a SWAT Operator on the full-time unit and served as an Assistant Team Leader. He has been a SWAT adjunct instructor at NCJA for 17 years. He is the CEO/Owner of Specialized Realistic Training, Inc., and Training Coordinator for the NCTOA. He is a Tactical Instructor at numerous Community Colleges, and is a former president of the NCTOA. He is also a former director of the Southeastern district for SWAT Association for North Carolina. His challenge to any Operator: "Stay in the Fight and Roll the Feet". "MAKE READY TO FIGHT"

Mitch Carter

Adjunct Instructor (SWAT, Patrol Rifle, Firearms Instructor, Rapid Deployment)
Sergeant (Ret.), Durham Police Department

Mitch Carter has been a sworn law enforcement officer for 43 years and has a wide range of experience including patrol, undercover operations, and SWAT. He has been a Specialized Firearms Instructor for 38 years. He has been an adjunct instructor at the North Carolina Justice Academy for 16 years and has taught extensively in subject matter areas including firearms, SWAT, and officer safety.

NCJA SWAT Operator I Course Schedule (46 hours)

<u>Day 1:</u>	10 hours
0800-1000	Course Orientation, Pre-test
1000-1200	Firearms Use in Tactical Operations
1200-1300	Lunch
1300-1700	Range: Handgun and Shoulder Weapon Fundamentals
1700-1800	Dinner
1800-2000	SWAT Operations Overview
<u>Day 2:</u>	10 hours
0800-1200	Legal Issues for SWAT Operations
1200-1300	Lunch
1300-1700	Range: Handgun and Shoulder Weapon CQB Skills
1700-1800	Dinner
1800-2000	Tactical Entries, Clearing and Search Techniques
<u>Day 3:</u>	10 hours
0800-1200	Sims House: Deliberate: Cornering, Room Entry, Hallway
1200-1300	Lunch
1300-1700	Sims House: Deliberate: Approach, Breaching, Clear, Force on Paper
1700-1800	Dinner
1900-2000	Sims House: Deliberate: Low Light Approach/Breach/Clear, Force on Paper
<u>Day 4:</u>	10 hours
0800-1000	Introduction to Distraction Devices
1000-1200	Sims House: Distraction Devices Practical
1200-1300	Lunch
1300-1700	Sims House: Dynamic: Cornering, Room Entry, Hallway, Approach, Breaching
1700-1800	Dinner
1800-2000	Sims House: Dynamic: Low Light Approach/Breach/Clear, Force on Paper
<u>Day 5:</u>	6 hours
0800-1200	Sims House: Deliberate and Dynamic: Approach/Breach/Clear, Force on Force
1200-1300	Lunch
1300-1500	Review, Post-Test, Course Conclusion

Title:	Course Orientation – SWAT Operator I
Lesson Purpose:	To introduce to the law enforcement officer an overview of Special Weapons and Tactics team operations, fundamentals of firearms employment in tactical environments, techniques of securing and clearing structures, and legal issues related to SWAT operations.
Training Objectives:	At the end of this block of instruction, the student will be able to achieve the following objectives in accordance with information received during the instructional period: 1. Accurately describe history and development of SWAT units in the US including the definition, historical development, and recent issues related to SWAT. 2. Accurately describe considerations related to SWAT operations including the purpose of SWAT teams, common operation types, and common operational profiles. 3. Correctly discuss considerations for SWAT team composition including staffing levels, mutual aid or regional membership, full time or part time assignments, key staffing positions, and critical skills and capabilities. 4. Accurately discuss considerations when selecting SWAT team members including physical abilities, firearm proficiency, performance during a formal interview, a review of work history, and psychological testing. 5. Completely describe considerations for training a SWAT team including initial training, sustainment training, and documentation of training. 6. Correctly list and explain recommended individual and team equipment needed for a SWAT team. 7. Identify, describe, and list in the correct sequence the seven (7) elements of successful SWAT operations. 8. Correctly describe firearms safety issues including the cardinal rules of firearms handling, and safety issues related to both operational handling and training. 9. Accurately describe the role of the handgun during SWAT operations.

10. Accurately describe considerations for the use of a rifle or submachine gun during SWAT operations including understanding zero and trajectory, height over bore and bore clearance, and the 50/200 zero.
11. Correctly describe the considerations for use of a shotgun during SWAT operations including as a lethal defensive weapon, for delivery of impact and chemical munitions, use of slugs, and during ballistic breaching.
12. Accurately identify considerations for the use of weapon mounted lights including their purpose and their selection.
13. Accurately identify considerations for the use slings on shoulder fired weapons including sling design and sling carry positions.
14. Correctly discuss considerations for the use of weapon mounted optics including the purpose of optics, the various designs of optics, and the importance of back up iron sights.
15. Describe the proper fundamentals of marksmanship and demonstrate their proper application during a series of controlled drills on the firing range including stance, natural point of aim, sight alignment and sight picture, trigger control, breathing, follow through, and handgun specific fundamentals.
16. Properly describe and demonstrate elements of various shooting positions including standing, kneeling, prone, and unconventional shooting positions.
17. Correctly describe and demonstrate firearms ready positions including attributes of ready positions, depressed muzzle, low ready, low port, high ready, and high port.
18. Correctly describe and demonstrate proper firearms handling including the workspace, loading, unloading, empty gun reloads, and tactical reloads.
19. Accurately describe and demonstrate clearances of common malfunctions including simple malfunctions and immediate action, complex malfunctions and remedial action, and catastrophic malfunctions.
20. Properly discuss instances when a transition to a secondary firearm is recommended and, in a range setting,

- successfully conduct a transition to secondary including an emergency transition and a tactical transition.
21. Accurately describe and demonstrate considerations for shooting on the move including pivots, turns, forward movement, rearward movement and lateral movement.
 22. Correctly describe and demonstrate, in the correct sequence, the six steps of the Pre Operational Weapons Checklist.
 23. Correctly describe, in the correct sequence, each of the four steps in the Pre-Engagement Sequence, demonstrate the sequence in a training environment, and explain how each step in the sequence can be optimized.
 24. Accurately describe reactive shooting and explain the impacts on reaction time and sight picture, considerations for handguns or shoulder fired weapons, and training for reactive shooting.
 25. Correctly describe, in the correct sequence, each of the four steps in the Post Engagement Sequence, and demonstrate the sequence in a training environment.
 26. Accurately describe the Cover/Covering Procedure and demonstrate the procedure during live fire range exercises.
 27. Correctly describe considerations for operations in low light conditions including reading the light, operating from the lowest level of light, light and move, and dominate with light.
 28. Correctly explain considerations related to, and demonstrate proper technique when, shooting and manipulating a firearm with a gasmask on.
 29. Correctly describe various tactical principles and explain how they apply to SWAT team building search tactics.
 30. Properly define listed terminology that is related to SWAT team building search tactics.
 31. Correctly describe and demonstrate proper weapon handling techniques during CQB and describe how the techniques promote both safety and effectiveness during CQB operations.

32. Properly demonstrate verbal and non-verbal communications techniques during CQB operations.
33. Correctly list and describe the six phases of execution of a CQB operation.
34. Properly describe the actions taken during the Contain phase of execution including the containment perimeter and the isolation perimeter.
35. Properly describe considerations during the Approach phase of execution including the use of a deployment vehicle, multiple small vehicles, and while on foot.
36. Properly describe and demonstrate individual actions during the Breach phase of execution including positioning of personnel, methods of entry, and contingency planning.
37. Accurately describe and demonstrate actions during the Enter, Search, Secure, and Clear phase of execution including cornering, room entry, and hallway movement during both Deliberate Movement and Dynamic Movement.
38. Correctly describe considerations during the Actions on Objective phase of execution including prisoner control, interior security, and exterior security tasks.
39. Correctly describe considerations during the Withdraw phase of execution including preparing to withdraw, maintaining security, and accounting for personnel and equipment.
40. Correctly describe considerations for the use of control and arrest techniques during CQB operations including legal issues, use of force concepts related to CQB, and commonly used physical techniques.
41. Accurately describe how Tactical Emergency Casualty Care should be conducted during CQB operations including during the Care Under Fire, Tactical Field Care, and Tactical Evacuation Care phases of TECC.

42. During a practical exercise, demonstrate the ability to safely enter, search, and clear a structure using tactics, techniques, and procedures discussed during class.
43. Accurately describe the history and general information related to distraction devices including design, multi-bangs, improvements and developments.
44. Correctly define and describe important terms related to distraction devices including fuze, deflagration, blast pressure, and fragmentation.
45. Correctly identify and describe the three main components of a distraction device.
46. Correctly describe the physiological and psychological effects of a distraction device when deployed.
47. Accurately describe the three primary methods of deployment for distraction devices and some common hazards associated with their deployment.
48. Correctly describe considerations related to render safe procedures for distraction devices.
49. Correctly describe various carry options for distraction devices.
50. Accurately describe several advantages and disadvantages of deploying distraction devices.
51. Accurately describe the considerations related to storage and transportation of distraction devices.
52. Correctly identify legal issues related to the use of distraction devices including key court decisions, general recommendations from case law, and preparing for court testimony.
53. In a practical setting, safely demonstrate the learned procedures for deploying a distraction device.
54. Explain and apply the standard of “objective reasonableness” during use of force situations that SWAT operators may face.

55. Based on current legal precedence, discuss SWAT equipment issues and the impact on mission related tasks.
56. Explain and analyze the legal principles that apply during mission planning and execution that impact the overall mission.
57. Explain and analyze the statutes that apply during the execution of an arrest warrant and a search warrant as well as review of any recent incidents.

Hours:

Forty-six (46) Hours

Instructional Method:

Lecture/Discussion/Practical Exercise

Testing Requirements:

Pre and Post Test and Practical Exercises

Materials Required:

Notebook
Pen/Pencil
Range attire including inclement weather gear
Ear and Eye Protection and Ball Cap
Deployment gear including pistol holster
Utility deployment uniform with long sleeves
Protective duty gloves
Magazine pouches for handgun
Ballistic protective vest, soft, concealable
Ballistic protective vest, plates, external
Ballistic helmet
APR/Gasmask with filter
Duty radio with headset
Duty handgun
Three magazines for duty handgun
Duty shoulder fired weapon with sling
Three magazines for shoulder fired weapon
Handgun ammunition, 500 rounds
Rifle ammunition, 500 rounds (non AP/Penetrator)
Weapon cleaning kit for both handgun and rifle

Training Aids:

LCD Projector/Overhead Projector
Computer
PowerPoint Presentation
Flip Chart

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Date Revised: January 2021

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Title: Course Orientation – SWAT Operator I

I. Introduction

A. Opening Statement

Complex Coordinated Terrorist Attacks, and Armed Barricade and Hostage Barricade incidents are among the most challenging and complex, and potentially deadly, incidents that law enforcement agencies will respond to. High Risk Arrest and Search Warrant Service operations require a very high level of competence to balance effectiveness with the reasonable and necessary level of force, appropriate tactics, and use of specialized equipment. Protective Security, whether focused on persons, physical assets, infrastructure, or events, requires specialized knowledge and ability that typical law enforcement personnel does not possess.

In an era of greater transparency and scrutiny related to law enforcement activity, society is demanding reform. These demands focus on the use of force, de-escalation, and the de-militarization of law enforcement. SWAT units are an obvious focus of discussions surrounding these issues. It is more important than ever that officers that are assigned to SWAT units and leadership that supervise and direct these units acquire professional knowledge, skills, and abilities based on current best practices and industry standards.

SWAT officers and units provide a critical capability to law enforcement organizations and the people that they serve. The primary focus of SWAT units is to provide tactical solutions that increase the likelihood of safe resolution of high risk incidents through tactical de-escalation strategies and the application of specialized capabilities and equipment. It is vitally important that SWAT officers are properly selected, adequately trained, properly equipped, and professionally and competently assigned and deployed.

B. Training Objectives

- C. This training will introduce the student to some of the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to enable the student to perform the basic functions of a member of a SWAT unit. The SWAT Operator I course will introduce the student to an overview of SWAT operations, firearms skills, legal issues, and the techniques related to securing structures. The SWAT Operator II course is designed as an extension to this basic training and introduces the student to other required knowledge, skills, and abilities, including tactical trauma care, woodland operations, vehicle operations, and operational planning. Together, the SWAT Operator I and II courses provide a basic training program for a new SWAT officer. This basic training must be followed up with extensive practice of the

skills and abilities, in a reality based context, once the student returns to duty with their own SWAT unit.

II. Body

A. Course Structure and Requirements

1. Attendance

The students are required to attend and participate in all classroom lectures and practical sessions. If an emergency causes a student to miss a class segment(s), the student is responsible for making arrangements with the course coordinator. Upon successful completion of missed work, a certificate will be issued.

2. Course Purpose

To introduce to the law enforcement officer an overview of Special Weapons and Tactics team operations, fundamentals of firearms employment in tactical environments, techniques of securing and clearing structures, and legal issues related to SWAT operations.

3. Concept

The focus of the North Carolina Justice Academy's SWAT Operator I course is the fundamentals. It is important for a new SWAT Operator to receive basic information related to the why, what, when, and how of SWAT tactics, techniques, and procedures in the context of law enforcement deployments. It is equally important for the student to learn and to demonstrate proficiency in safe and effective weapon handling, marksmanship, operations, and deployment.

4. Structure

The SWAT Operator I course combines classroom lecture, practical live fire sessions on the range, and practical maneuver exercises in various training environments designed to simulate real world operational environments.

B. Testing Criteria

1. Pre-Test

The NC Justice Academy is required to give its students a pre-test prior to the course beginning. This test helps the instructional staff determine the student's strengths and weaknesses based on the intended curriculum. This pre-test does not count towards the students' final grade. There very well may be questions on the pre-test that you do not know the answers for, hence the need for learning. Take the pre-test with an open mind and answer all of the questions based on what you already know and have experienced. The end result is the final post-test for the course and your overall performance during the practical skills sessions.

2. Practical Skills and Qualification

Each student will be expected to perform the practical skills segments of this course. The student will be evaluated on their performance on the firing range and during practical maneuver exercises.

3. Post-Test

A written post-test will be administered at the end of the course. The student will be required to score at least 80% on the post-test in order to successfully complete the course. Should a student fail the post-test, a re-test will be allowed and will be given at the discretion of the coordinator.

III. Conclusion

A. Summary

The new SWAT officer must understand the basics of SWAT operations including team composition and staffing, common mission profiles, critical skills, and recommendations related to selection, training, and equipment. The new SWAT officer must also demonstrate safe and effective weapon employment during high stress, team oriented maneuver. The techniques and procedures introduced during this training related to securing and clearing structures are critical for the effective execution of SWAT operations. It is also vital that all members of the SWAT unit understand the legal issues related to their operations. This course will begin to prepare the student officer for the role of SWAT Operator at their agency. The student will be expected to attend all classes and training, to demonstrate proficiency with practical skills, and to pass the post-test.

B. Questions

- C. Upon completion of this course and returning to your agency, you will be able to provide a critical capability to your organization and to the citizens that depend on you for quality of life and protection. SWAT units will typically be deployed during incidents where a higher risk is assessed. The SWAT unit can enhance the safety of the victims, uninvolved citizens in the area, the law enforcement personnel that are responding, and the suspects.

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TITLE:	SWAT Operations Overview
Lesson Purpose:	To present the student with an overview of SWAT operations, including the history and development of SWAT teams, common operational activities, team composition and staffing, key positions and critical skills, team member selection and training, common equipment, and elements of successful SWAT operations.
Training Objectives:	At the end of this block of instruction, the participant will be able to achieve the following objectives in accordance with the information received during the instructional period: 1. Accurately describe history and development of SWAT units in the US including the definition, historical development, and recent issues related to SWAT. 2. Accurately describe considerations related to SWAT operations including the purpose of SWAT teams, common operation types, and common operational profiles. 3. Correctly discuss considerations for SWAT team composition including staffing levels, mutual aid or regional membership, full time or part time assignments, key staffing positions, and critical skills and capabilities. 4. Accurately discuss considerations when selecting SWAT team members including physical abilities, firearm proficiency, performance during a formal interview, a review of work history, and psychological testing. 5. Completely describe considerations for training a SWAT team including initial training, sustainment training, and documentation of training. 6. Correctly list and explain recommended individual and team equipment needed for a SWAT team. 7. Identify, discuss, and list in the correct sequence the seven (7) elements of successful SWAT operations.
Hours:	Three (3) Hours
Instructional Method:	Lecture/Discussion
Testing Requirements:	Pre-Test and Post-Test (Course Level Tests)

Training Environment: Academic Classroom

Materials Required: Paper
Pen/Pencil for Notes

Training Aids: Computer
Instructor Lesson Plan
Student Lesson Plans
PowerPoint Presentation
Whiteboard or Flip Chart with Markers
Handouts

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Date Revised: December 2011

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Date Revised: February 2015

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Date Revised: February 2018

Reviewed By: Rodney Harris
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Date Reviewed: January 2019

Revised By: Aaron Ligo
Instructor/Developer
North Carolina Justice Academy

Date Revised: January 2021

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TITLE: SWAT Operations Overview

I. Introduction

A. Opening Statement

Modern law enforcement agencies must be able to respond to critical emergencies that threaten the safety of the people that they serve. These emergencies may include active shooter events or terrorist attacks, hostage taking, and barricade incidents involving armed and dangerous criminal suspects. Agencies must also be capable of conducting pro-active law enforcement operations that target organized crime and suspects that pose a high risk to police and to citizens that live and work in the affected area. These high risk operations may include the service of arrest warrants or search warrants, and may include on-view arrest operations that utilize undercover officers. At the same time, society is demanding that law enforcement closely assess the way that these operations are conducted and demanding that law enforcement de-escalate their use of force whenever feasible.

Special Weapons and Tactics officers and teams are specifically trained and equipped to respond to critical emergencies and to secure people and property during high risk operations while maximizing discrimination and accuracy during the use of force. The primary focus of SWAT units is to provide tactical solutions that increase the likelihood of safe resolution of high risk incidents through tactical de-escalation strategies and the application of specialized capabilities and equipment. Modern law enforcement agencies should consider their SWAT units as their primary tool for resolution of high risk critical incidents and execution of high risk law enforcement operations.

B. Training Objectives

1. Accurately describe history and development of SWAT units in the US including the definition, historical development, and recent issues related to SWAT.
2. Accurately describe considerations related to SWAT operations including the purpose of SWAT teams, common operation types, and common operational profiles.
3. Correctly discuss considerations for SWAT team composition including staffing levels, mutual aid or regional membership, full time or part time assignments, key staffing positions, and critical skills and capabilities.
4. Accurately discuss considerations when selecting SWAT team members including physical abilities, firearm proficiency, performance during a formal interview, a review of work history, and psychological testing.

5. Completely describe considerations for training a SWAT team including initial training, sustainment training, and documentation of training.
6. Correctly list and explain recommended individual and team equipment needed for a SWAT team.
7. Identify, discuss, and list in the correct sequence the seven (7) elements of successful SWAT operations.

C. Reasons

The law enforcement profession is constantly evolving and modernizing. The training that law enforcement officers receive now is different than the training that officers received ten years ago and is significantly different than the training of twenty years ago. Just as the broader law enforcement profession has changed, so has the profession of the Special Weapons and Tactics officer. Many new SWAT officers will receive training that is different from that of the senior members of their team that acquired their training ten or fifteen years ago. It is important that new SWAT officers understand the reasons and principles behind the knowledge, skills, and abilities covered during training so that they can explain any updates to the more senior members of their team upon returning to their agency.

This lesson plan will provide an overview of the most updated information related to the SWAT profession including the history and development of SWAT units, recent issues related to SWAT that agencies are faced with, updated information about team composition, selection, training, and equipment, and information about the elements of successful SWAT operations. This lesson plan will provide the context to support the other training during this course that will focus on firearms employment and tactical team maneuvers.

II. Body

A. History and Development

1. Definition

- a) The National Tactical Officers Association (NTOA) defines Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) and Tactical Response Teams (TRT) as designated law enforcement teams, whose members are recruited, selected, trained, equipped and assigned to resolve critical incidents involving a threat to public safety, which would otherwise exceed the capabilities of traditional law enforcement first responders and/or investigative units. SWAT and TRT units are focused on incident resolution rather than

investigation or law enforcement. Their primary purpose is to increase the likelihood of safely resolving critical incidents.³

- b) California Police Officer Standards and Training defines a SWAT team as a designated group of law enforcement officers who are selected, trained, and equipped to work as a coordinated team in an attempt to resolve incidents that may exceed the capabilities of first responders or investigative units. The mission of SWAT is to save lives. The primary focus of SWAT is to provide tactical solutions that increase the likelihood of de-escalation and safe resolution of high risk incidents.⁴
- c) The North Carolina Justice Academy defines a SWAT unit as a law enforcement team whose members are selected, trained, and equipped to resolve critical incidents and to execute high risk law enforcement operations that may exceed the capabilities of first responders or investigative units. The primary focus of SWAT units is to provide tactical solutions that increase the likelihood of safe resolution of high risk incidents through tactical de-escalation strategies and the application of specialized capabilities and equipment.

2. Early Development

- a) 1960's/Civil Unrest and Guerilla Movements.

In 1964, Philadelphia PD developed a 100 officer Special Weapons and Tactics unit to respond directly to in-progress bank robberies. At the same time, the LAPD developed a SWAT unit comprised of 15 four-man teams with the purpose of responding to sniper events and providing protection to the police station houses during civil unrest. High profile police and SWAT incidents including the LA Watts Riots (1965), Texas Tower Sniper (1966), LA Black Panther shootout (1969), and the LA Symbionese Liberation Army shootout (1974), solidified the presence and relevance of SWAT units in early police agencies.

- b) 1980's/War on Drugs

In the early 1970's SWAT units executed less than a thousand "drug raids" annually throughout the country. In the early 1980's, President Ronald Reagan declared drugs to be a threat to US national security. Between the early 1980's and the early 1990's, the US was impacted by what became known as the "crack (cocaine) epidemic" which spawned an increased criminal culture of street level drug dealers and organized criminal networks. In

1996, the number of “drug raids” by SWAT units had risen to around 30000, nationwide. During this period, the homicide rates for sectors of society directly impacted by the crack cocaine epidemic more than doubled. Some studies today show that elevated contemporary crime rates in some sectors of society can be traced back to the criminal patterns that were formed during 1980’s and 1990’s. SWAT teams during this period were well established as the units that executed a large number of high risk search and arrest warrants for investigative units that focused on drugs, gangs and other organized criminals, and violent crime.

c) 2000’s/War on Terror

Since the attacks on September 11, 2001, there have been more than eighty terrorist attacks or plots within the United States (as of 2020). These have included anthrax attacks, bombings, mass shootings, and hostage takings. Some of the more prominent attacks have included the Beltway Sniper attacks, the Fort Hood shooting, the Boston Marathon bombing, the San Bernardino attack, and the Pulse Nightclub shooting. Federal programs have funded training and equipment to prepare SWAT teams for anti-terror and counter-terror operations. SWAT teams during this period more commonly provided threat assessments and countermeasures for large scale public events and other “soft targets” that would be vulnerable to terrorist attacks. SWAT teams also developed capabilities to respond to incidents involving chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive (CBRNE) threats during criminal terrorist attacks and investigations.

3. Recent Issues

a) Militarization vs Modernization of Law Enforcement

Throughout the past decade, society has debated the issue of the “militarization” of law enforcement. Critics decry the use of military gear, weapons, and tactics during domestic law enforcement operations. Some argue that a military ethos and violent tactics and equipment have no place in law enforcement. SWAT units are the main targets of many of these complaints – with Mobile Field Force or crowd control units also bearing a lot of scrutiny.⁵

Many in society see the same issue as the “modernization” of law enforcement. The use of helmets and armor, although similar to those worn by military personnel, is strictly protective in nature

and actually enables officers to utilize more discretion in their use of force. Specialized weapons with optics and weapon mounted lights may be similar to those used by the military but they are used in support of law enforcement objectives rather than military objectives and enhance the safety of the public by virtue of their enhanced accuracy and effective range. Armored vehicles, often referred to as “violent equipment” or “tanks” by critics, provide protection from small arms fire to occupants and enable SWAT officers to refrain from using deadly force and promote the use of trained crisis negotiators to resolve standoffs with armed subjects.

The complaint over the use of “military tactics” demonstrates a lack of understanding and knowledge of tactics, techniques, and procedures that are actually used by the military and those used by law enforcement. Military tactics would involve lethal air to ground munitions, indirect fire, and suppressive fire prior to and during the execution of a maneuver by troops to seize an objective – none of which would be appropriate or legal in law enforcement operations. SWAT officers use lethal weapons only for protection of themselves or others and rely on a range of less lethal munitions to support their operations. Law enforcement SWAT officers are held to the exact same laws and standards of any other officer in the areas of search and seizure and the use of force. SWAT officers receive specialized training on how to safely and effectively seize persons and property for the preservation of life and the execution of search or arrest warrants. This training enhances the safety of those involved. The same operations, when conducted by officers without this training, would still involve officers seizing persons and property but they would be doing so without the benefit of proper training and equipment.

b) Inappropriate vs Appropriate Use of SWAT

- (1) SWAT Deployments. Another commonly debated issue is whether SWAT units are being used appropriately. Some members of society argue that SWAT units were originally intended to respond to major emergencies such as sniper attacks, terrorist attacks, and hostage incidents, and that their use in drug investigations and other law enforcement activities is inappropriate. This line of concern is primarily focused on the use of SWAT teams in the execution of “drug raids”.

It is likely that, whether a SWAT unit is used or not, law enforcement agencies will continue to conduct drug enforcement operations and a component of these

enforcement efforts will be the service of search warrants at residential structures. SWAT units are typically utilized when a particular suspect or location presents a “high risk”. The questions that should be addressed by agency and SWAT unit leadership are: what is the reasonable threshold for a “high risk” operation and, are these operations safer for all concerned when executed by officers with relevant training and equipment?

- (2) SWAT Equipment. Along the lines of the complaint about the “militarization” of law enforcement is the complaint that much of the equipment utilized by SWAT units is unnecessary and often used inappropriately. These complaints will often point out that using an armored vehicle during a search warrant service in a residential neighborhood or having sniper rifles overtly covering large public demonstrations is inherently unreasonable. These complaints often focus on the appearance of the equipment rather than the actual use or intended purpose of the equipment. It is important for agency and SWAT unit leadership to inform the public about this equipment when possible and ensure that this specialized equipment is used appropriately and reasonably according to established policies and guidelines.

c) Community Policing for SWAT

The issues of militarization vs modernization and the appropriate use of SWAT units often can be mitigated and resolved through positive public relations and community policing efforts by the agency and the SWAT unit.

- (1) Public Information. It is important that the people in the jurisdiction being served are informed about the use of the SWAT unit and SWAT equipment. The goal should be that the public understands the legal and practical use of the unit and understands that the SWAT unit is a positive asset within their community. This may include public information releases after any high profile SWAT activity or when acquiring new SWAT equipment such as an armored vehicle. Whereas a “need to know” approach used to be common when responding to public concerns, in modern law enforcement transparency and dialog, wherever possible, is important.

- (2) Professionalism and Training. SWAT teams are high profile units and often conduct high profile, high risk operations. The officers must be selected and trained to promote professional capability and behavior. It is vital that when the SWAT unit is utilized, the individual officers do their job proficiently and interact with the public in a professional manner.
- (3) Appropriate Use and Deployment of SWAT and SWAT Equipment. SWAT units should establish risk assessment procedures so that they can record their decision making process in regards to the decision to deploy the team and utilize specialized equipment. This will support the goal of ensuring that the team is utilized when reasonable and necessary. The deployment guidelines and responsibilities should be described and defined in policy and procedure documents.
- (4) Community Outreach and Events. The agency and the SWAT unit should consider engaging in public events in order to promote a positive image and to enable informative interactions between the public and members of the team. Some of these activities can include presentations at school events, Touch-A-Truck events, Citizen Police Academies, National Night Out events, and presentations and demonstrations for police advisory boards and for local elected leadership.
- (5) On-Duty Interactions. Some of the most impactful interactions between the public and the SWAT unit are during actual live operations. SWAT officers should be encouraged to engage the public when possible and to strive to create positive impacts. This will commonly be possible when a SWAT officer is assigned to work on an isolation perimeter around an incident scene. Members of the public will often witness SWAT activity or approach the scene once the incident is stabilized. SWAT officers should engage these people, when possible, and explain the purpose of the activity and answer any questions. The goal of these interactions is to enable a citizen that may have concerns for their safety or the use of the team in their neighborhood to leave with a positive impression of both the individual officers on the team and the agency's appropriate use of the team.

B. Operations

1. Purpose

The purpose of a SWAT team is to provide a systematic approach to saving lives through the use of tactical solutions that increase the likelihood of safe resolution of high risk incidents through tactical de-escalation strategies and the application of specialized capabilities and equipment. SWAT teams dedicate training and preparation efforts to properly resolving critical incidents with the appropriate level of force in order to minimize potential harm to uninvolved citizens, victims, first responders, and suspects. SWAT teams deploy with specialized equipment and vehicles that enable the agency to maximize safety when responding and therefore to maximize de-escalation strategies when possible.

2. Common Mission Types

a) Active Assailant.

SWAT units may be called to respond to Active Shooter or Active Assailant incidents. SWAT units will typically possess better armor, more accurate weapons, specially trained personnel, and capabilities that increase the safety of all involved when responding to these incidents.

b) Terrorist Attack

Recent terrorist attacks have involved the use of explosives and high powered firearms, multiple cells attacking multiple targets, fire used as a weapon, and barricade incidents with and without hostages. SWAT teams will conduct training to prepare for Complex Coordinated Terrorist Attacks, and training to mitigate the threat of explosives and other non-traditional weapons.

c) Hostage Incident/Rescue

A hostage incident is defined as an incident that involves a suspect unlawfully holding a person against their will, threatening harm to that person in order to coerce action from others, and demonstrating the capability to harm that person. The SWAT unit will have the capability to execute an emergency rescue or deliberate rescue, and will have the capability to support negotiation efforts to resolve the incident without force.

d) Non-Hostage Barricade

The tactics, techniques, and procedures used by the SWAT team, along with their specialized equipment, enables the team to maximize safety for everyone involved when there is a potentially armed and dangerous subject that is non-compliant and barricaded in a structure or a vehicle. The team may also be utilized to respond to a suicidal subject stand-off or barricade incident when that person poses a threat to others or is barricaded in a location that would prevent access to them if they do harm to themselves.

e) Protective Security

SWAT units will have the capability to support protective security at large scale public events such as parades or street festivals. These types of events have been the target of active assailant and terrorist attacks in recent years and it has become more common for agencies to set up some form of security plan in advance. SWAT units may also have the capability to provide a Protective Security Detail when there is a request from a dignitary or government official. SWAT units will commonly provide support to State and Federal protective agencies such as the US Secret Service or the Department of State Diplomatic Security Service.

f) Close Cover

When an agency places an undercover officer in the field, they may decide to deploy the SWAT unit to provide close cover in the event that the UC is in danger. This may be in a mobile operation when the UC is moving in a vehicle, or may be in a fixed operation when the UC is working in a structure such as a hotel room.

g) Civil Unrest/Mobile Field Force Support

There is a wide range of capabilities that a SWAT unit can bring to the table to assist with the deployment of a Mobile Field Force. SWAT units can provide less lethal impact and chemical munitions, and can provide lethal cover to the MFF officers. SWAT units can also be prepared to conduct officer or citizen rescues if necessary as well as high risk arrests.

h) High Risk Arrest

When a suspect is subject to arrest and poses an unusually high risk to law enforcement, the SWAT unit may be utilized to make the arrest. This may be when there is information about the suspect's history of violence or access to weapons, and may be when the suspect is likely to be located within a structure that may

require forced entry by law enforcement. SWAT units will be capable of mission planning that may include use of a ruse, or a covert or undercover approach to make an arrest in a manner that is safer than a direct approach by uniformed officers. SWAT units may also be utilized to make high risk on-view arrests in coordination with investigative units that focus on drugs, gangs, or violent crime such as robbery or homicide.

i) High Risk Search

If a search warrant is obtained for a location that is likely to be occupied by armed and dangerous subjects and is likely to require forced entry, it is safer to utilize a SWAT team to secure the premises to be searched. SWAT teams conduct specialized training for these circumstances and possess specialized equipment that will enable them to be more discriminate in their use of force.

j) Structure or Area Search

Law enforcement personnel commonly search structures or areas to render them secure. If there is a belief that the structure or area may be occupied by an armed and dangerous suspect, then the SWAT unit may be utilized to more safely render the area of concern secure. This might be when a suspect has run into a wooded area or into an abandoned structure.

3. Common Mission Profiles

a) Surround and Call Out/Containment

In these operations, the SWAT team establishes a visual and physical containment perimeter around an incident location and attempts to gain compliance from people within the containment perimeter. These operations may be due to a response to a critical incident such as an armed barricade or a hostage incident. These operations may also be due to a pre-planned operation such as a high risk arrest warrant.

This mission profile is considered a de-escalation tactic for a number of reasons. The equipment and training of the SWAT unit enables them to establish safe positions around a location in such a way that the officers are less likely to resort to deadly force. The SWAT team will allow time to pass and will attempt to communicate with people inside the containment perimeter – often with the assistance of a trained crisis negotiator. The SWAT team will be able to utilize less lethal munitions such as chemical

irritants that can dislodge the occupants of the location so they can be secured without a direct action by the team.

b) Dynamic Entry/Emergency Entry

These missions involve the team placing an emphasis on rapidly securing a location by approaching the incident location, moving directly to a breach point, gaining entry, and moving directly into and through the incident location in order to secure occupants and render the location safe. These operations are required if “time” is a component of operational success. Typically, this would be when a rescue is being performed to prevent or mitigate harm to victims. This would also be when the SWAT team is executing a search warrant for an investigative unit that is seeking evidence that can easily be destroyed such as controlled substances or child pornography kept on a computer. This type of operation would also be appropriate in circumstances where the risk assessment and operational planning cycle determines that a direct action will be safer for the community at large. For example, the team determines that conducting a surround and call out/containment operation would endanger uninvolved members of the community that live in the area.

c) Deliberate Entry/Covert Entry

These missions involve the team placing an emphasis on control of maneuver and communications by moving more slowly and deliberately during the approach, breach, entry and clearing operation. These operations do not involve “time” as a component of operational success. Typically, this would be when a location must be secured to confirm or deny the presence of any potentially dangerous suspects. This could also be when an incident has gone “cold” and there is no further immediate threat to life but the location must be secured to search for additional victims and suspects or to render aid to victims.

d) Breach and Hold

These missions involve the team approaching and breaching a target structure and then establishing a position at the entry point. The team will then attempt to communicate with subjects inside the structure to gain verbal compliance. If necessary, the team can deploy additional measures from the positions at the entry point such as chemical munitions. The goal of this tactic is to establish one or more entry points, to mitigate the risks to the team of conducting CQB operations, and to enable the subjects in the

structure an opportunity to comply. Whether or not any subjects comply with the team's directions, the team will have to conduct a search of the structure at some point to render it secure.

e) Partial (or Limited) Penetration

These missions involve the team approaching and breaching a target structure, entering the structure either with deliberate or dynamic maneuver, and then establishing a position or positions within the structure. The team may seek to control critical features of the structure such as hallways and stairways. The team will then attempt to communicate with subjects inside the structure to gain verbal compliance. If necessary, the team can deploy additional measures from the positions within the structure such as chemical munitions. The goal of this tactic is to establish one or more entry points, to establish control over critical features within the structure, to mitigate the risks to the team of conducting CQB operations, and to enable the subjects in the structure an opportunity to comply. Whether or not any subjects comply with the team's directions, the team will have to conduct a search of the structure at some point to render it secure.

f) Vehicle Assaults

Every SWAT team will have a wide variety of vehicles within its jurisdiction. SWAT teams must be prepared to conduct operations in and around vehicles for rescues, threat mitigation, and arrest or search operations.

(1) Large. Large vehicles are airplanes and trains. These vehicles require the team to enter the vehicle in order to secure them from the inside. If a SWAT team has an airport or a passenger rail within its jurisdiction, then the team should consider developing capability to secure these types of vehicles.

(2) Medium. Medium vehicles include interstate busses, commuter busses, and school busses. These vehicles can be initially secured from the outside but require the SWAT team to make an entry to secure and extract the occupants. Nearly every SWAT team will have some form of medium vehicles that commonly operate within its jurisdiction and should develop the capability to secure these types of vehicles.

- (3) Small. Small vehicles include everything that is smaller than a bus. This includes passenger cars, trucks, and vans. These vehicles can be secured from outside and the SWAT team will extract occupants from the outside without having to actually enter the vehicle. There have been many incidents that involve either a hostage barricade or a non-hostage barricade inside a small vehicle. SWAT teams may also be utilized to conduct high risk operations that involve arresting or detaining suspects that are inside small vehicles.

g) Surveillance and Takedown

These missions involve the team conducting covert surveillance of a location and/or subject and then establishing control when predetermined conditions that support mission objectives are met. The surveillance may be fixed, mobile, or both. The takedown may be a vehicle assault, an entry to a structure, an open air arrest, or a combination of these options. The goal of this tactic may be to establish positive identification or location of a suspect, it may be to avoid entering a structure at all, or it may be to take a subject into custody without alerting other members of an organized criminal/terrorist group.

h) Ruse and Takedown

These missions involve the team actively creating conditions that support mission objectives and then establishing control. Typically, the ruse will enable the team to establish some level of tactical advantage and will typically involve the target subject taking some action based on the ruse. A target subject may be called to an advantageous location, for example. The takedown may be a vehicle assault, an entry to a structure, an open air arrest, or a combination of these options. The goal of this tactic may be to establish positive identification or location of a suspect, it may be to avoid entering a structure at all, or it may be to take a subject into custody without alerting other members of an organized criminal/terrorist group.

i) Low Visibility Protective Security

These missions involve the team performing as a “dignitary protection detail” in unmarked vehicles and plain clothes – similar to the way the US Secret Service operates when it provides

protection for the President. This might involve a large team performing motorcade operations and walking with the protectee when not in a vehicle and visiting multiple locations over several days. This might also involve a small group of team members providing security for a protectee during a single event at a single location.

j) Armored Vehicle Operations/Rescue

In recent years there have been active assailants and sniper incidents that have injured officers and citizens alike. In some of these incidents, officers that have attempted to render aid to victims have themselves become victims. In cases where a person or persons must be rescued from a location and there is a belief that the suspect may still be in the area and poses a threat to officers and victims, the SWAT team may be utilized to execute the rescue with an armored vehicle.

k) Woodland Operations

SWAT teams may be utilized to search a wooded area for an armed and dangerous suspect. This may involve the team providing tactical support to a police canine during a track or it may involve the team conducting a complete search of a wooded area in order to render it safe.

l) Event Security/Mobile Field Force Support/QRF

These missions require the team to provide a quick reaction force for a planned event. For example, there may be a planned political rally and the SWAT team is staged nearby with the capability to respond to an active assailant. SWAT units may also be assigned to work with their agency's Mobile Field Force when responding to civil unrest incidents. On these operations the SWAT unit may be tasked with providing less lethal munitions or an officer rescue capability. This might also involve the team snipers providing observation, intelligence gathering, and precision rifle fire at the scene of a large scale public event.

C. Composition

1. Staffing

In order for a SWAT unit to effectively and safely conduct operations, it must have a sufficient number of properly trained officers. Various common mission profiles require a minimum number of officers. These

recommended minimums take into account the possibility of an officer being injured during a high risk incident and the SWAT unit needing adequate personnel to render aid to the injured officer while still being able to address the ongoing threat posed by the suspect(s). When an agency considers staffing levels for a SWAT unit, consideration must also be given to the fact that not all members will be available at all times. Officers may be out of town, sick, or injured, and therefore at any given time a team may not be capable of deploying its full strength. Agencies must determine what mission profiles they expect the SWAT team to be capable of and then provide adequate staffing to support those missions.

The following discussion is based on a typical residential structure and minimum numbers would logically be much larger for larger structures or incident areas.

a) Containment.

In order to effectively and safely contain an incident location, a minimum of eight officers is recommended. This assumes a two officer element is positioned on each of four sides of a location. The two officer element is important because it provides the mutual support necessary for many tasks to be performed safely.

b) Entry/Maneuver/Task Element.

In order to effectively and safely approach, breach, enter, and clear a location, a minimum of eight officers is recommended. This will enable a team to apply the tactical principles during the operation and to have sufficient personnel to respond to emergencies such as an officer down while also maintaining security. An eight officer team will be able to effectively conduct an emergency or dynamic entry and control a typical residential structure, but will not be able to rapidly control larger structures.

c) Sniper/Observer.

In order to effectively and safely deploy snipers to all sides of a structure, a minimum of eight officers that are trained and equipped to operate as snipers is recommended. This will enable the snipers to deploy to four positions with a sniper/observer pair. This is necessary for mutual support between the sniper and observer and also to ensure interlocking and overlapping fields of fire and observation.

d) Command and Leadership.

- (1) Team Leader. A Team Leader is an operational supervisor that maneuvers with the team and is trained and equipped at the same minimum level of competence as the rest of the team. The minimum numbers recommended listed for containment, entry, and sniper teams, above, assumes that one of those officers is the Team Leader for that team. It is recommended that an Assistant Team Leader be identified for each team to fill the Team Leader's role when necessary. A team that is comprised of multiple smaller elements will have a single Team Leader and Assistant Team Leader that manages the entire team.
- (2) Commander. A Commander is an administrative and tactical supervisor that responds to the command post and coordinates efforts between the SWAT team and the rest of the incident response. The SWAT team will require at least one Commander and it is recommended that an Assistant Commander be assigned to fill the Commander's role when necessary.

e) Overall Staffing.

The total number of trained and equipped SWAT officers that an agency has should be determined by the mission profiles that the agency needs the team to be capable of. It is important for agency leadership to understand that the decision to direct their SWAT officers to conduct missions with inadequate staffing has direct impacts on officer and citizen safety.

If the agency requires the team to be capable of a single task at one time (containing an armed barricade incident, for example), then an eight officer team with one Commander may be sufficient. This team would not be capable of safely and effectively maintaining containment AND maneuvering and making entry to a structure simultaneously.

An agency that requires a SWAT team that is capable of conducting a hostage rescue, arguably one of the most complex SWAT operations, would need, at a minimum, a Commander, a sniper/observer team, a containment team, an emergency entry team, and a team that is planning and rehearsing the deliberate rescue option. This is a total of 33 SWAT officers. If non-SWAT officers are assigned to the containment role, then 25 SWAT officers would be needed. This would require that the SWAT team provide regular training to non-SWAT officers on how to conduct containment operations.

2. Single Agency vs Mutual Aid vs Regional Team

Once an agency has determined what missions will be required by the SWAT unit in their jurisdiction, then the appropriate number of SWAT officers can be determined. Optimally, the agency will be able to dedicate an appropriate number of personnel to the SWAT unit. If an agency is unable to staff an appropriately sized SWAT unit, then the agency has two options to meet their needs: Mutual Aid or Regional Team.

a) Single Agency

Large agencies may be able to adequately staff a fully capable SWAT unit. For example, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department has over 1700 sworn personnel and, according to their website, the SWAT unit is staffed by 43 tactical officers and an additional 18 crisis negotiators and medics.⁶ Agencies that are able to staff their own SWAT unit should still consider Mutual Aid or Regional Team capabilities for unusual critical incidents or to provide highly specialized technical capabilities.

b) Mutual Aid.

Agency leadership, along with team leadership, will determine what missions can be safely and effectively conducted with their organic SWAT team and what missions cannot be safely and effectively conducted. For example, the agency may determine that they can safely and effectively conduct high risk warrant service but not barricade resolution or hostage rescue. A large agency may determine that they can safely respond to a single hostage incident but would need mutual aid support if the incident lasted longer than 12 hours or if there was an additional, unrelated SWAT incident at the same time.

Once the agency has determined its limitations, it must examine the capabilities of local, regional, state, and federal agencies and create mutual aid agreements to fill in the capability gaps. In addition to establishing the mutual aid agreements, it is important to conduct training with the SWAT unit that will be responding into the jurisdiction. The local team may wish to adopt terminology, tactics, techniques, and procedures that mesh with the mutual aid team so that they can more easily integrate and support each other when the mutual aid team responds.

c) Regional/Multi-Agency Team.

Most agencies are unable to adequately staff a SWAT unit that is capable of conducting all required mission profiles. In addition, many agencies find it difficult to justify the expense and training required to staff a SWAT unit based on the frequency of SWAT operations. The best solution is often to create a regional SWAT unit. Several different agencies form an agreement that enables them each to provide a fair level of funding and personnel to staff an adequately sized team. The regional team would include all key personnel from the Commander down to the SWAT officers. This regional team would provide all tactical law enforcement services within all of the member jurisdictions.

3. Full time vs Part Time

Another consideration is whether the personnel are assigned to the SWAT unit on a full time or part time basis.

a) Part Time.

Part time SWAT officers work a primary assignment and SWAT is their secondary assignment. For example, the officer is assigned to a patrol squad and works as a member of that patrol squad. The officer only works in the SWAT assignment when participating in required training or when the SWAT unit is activated to provide tactical support. The disadvantage to this method is that when an officer is activated for a SWAT mission or training, that officer depletes the personnel available to the primary assignment unit. This factor can have additional negative impacts on participation in training and the deployment of the SWAT unit.

b) Full Time.

Full time SWAT officers are assigned to work with the SWAT unit as their primary assignment. Depending on operational tempo and training requirements, the SWAT unit may have a collateral duty that they perform, such as a pro-active patrol function or community policing unit. The advantage to this method is that when these officers are required to perform their SWAT function – either operationally or during required training – they are not depleting the personnel from some other unit(s). Generally, this will make it more likely that personnel will attend all required training and will also make it more likely that the SWAT unit is utilized when appropriate. It will also enable the team to undertake larger, long term operations such as multi-day protective security operations, surveillance and reconnaissance operations, and long term high risk enforcement operations.

4. Key Positions

SWAT teams consist of **individuals** with specialty skills. The team should possess the capability to respond to any reasonably anticipated incident. Regardless of the size and resources of the individual agency, there are specific **key positions** and critical skills which are recommended for all teams.

Please note that no one individual is more important than another. Without a well-balanced and well trained team the objectives will not be met effectively. It is also important that all team members should be able to voice concerns or suggestions in a constructive way during mission briefings. By doing this, every member has a vested interest in the overall success while increasing team cohesiveness.

a) Commander/Assistant Commander

A Commander is an administrative and tactical supervisor. The Commander is responsible for routine administrative leadership of the SWAT unit. The Commander also responds to the command post and coordinates efforts between the SWAT team and the rest of the response during critical incidents. It is recommended that the SWAT Commander have experience as a SWAT team member, if possible. It is recommended that the SWAT Commander attend a certified training course that addresses SWAT Command issues. It is also recommended that the SWAT Commander attends and participates in regular SWAT training. Agency and SWAT unit SOP should clearly define minimum training and experience standards for the SWAT Commander and should clearly define the Commander's role within the unit. It is recommended that an Assistant Commander, with the same minimum training and experience standards, be identified in order to assist or replace the Commander when necessary.

b) Team Leader⁷/Assistant Team Leader

This is an individual, usually with supervisory rank, who possesses leadership ability. The Team Leader works within the unit to plan, organize and carry out missions, and must have knowledge of each team position and familiarity with all issued equipment. Agency and SWAT unit SOP should clearly define minimum training and experience standards for the SWAT Team Leader and should clearly define the Team Leader's role within the unit. It is recommended that an Assistant Team Leader, with the same

minimum training and experience standards, be identified in order to assist or replace the Team Leader when necessary.

c) SWAT Officer.

This individual is a selected, trained, and assigned officer that has acquired all of the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to function as a basic SWAT officer. At a minimum, this officer should have the ability to function as a member of a team when conducting all required mission profiles. All SWAT officers should have a demonstrated a minimum level of competence in knowledge, skills, and abilities including firearms proficiency, unarmed defensive and subject control skills, trauma care, mechanical breaching, and a basic operational competency in all tactics, techniques, and procedures utilized by the team. Some SWAT officers may have additional specialty functions within the team such as Lead Breacher, Explosive Breacher, Less Lethal Munitions Officer, or Armored Vehicle Operator.

d) Sniper

In some instances, this individual belongs to another unit separate from the SWAT team. However, it is common for this person to pull double duty as any one of the SWAT team positions and sniper/observer. Typically, this person should be one of the most experienced members of the team and have a thorough understanding of SWAT tactics and procedures. They must prove through training and performance the ability to consistently place a precision shot in extreme conditions within a matter of mere seconds.

e) Lead Breacher

Although all members of the team should have the capability to conduct basic mechanical breaching operations, it is recommended that at least one member of the team be identified as the Lead Breacher. This operator will be a specialist in the area of breaching including breach point analysis, familiarization with common structure design and entry point construction, familiarization with common countermeasures to methods of entry, and operational planning related to breaching. The Lead Breacher will ensure that the team is conducting regular documented sustainment training on breaching operations. The Lead Breacher will also identify capability gaps and work with the Team Leader to fill those gaps.

f) Drone (UAV)/Robot Operator

As this technology becomes available to law enforcement agencies and SWAT units, it is recommended that the team identify a member of the team to specialize in this area. The Drone/Robot Operator will be responsible for maintenance of the equipment, operation of the equipment during operations, and training of team members related to the equipment. The Drone/Robot Operator will also be responsible for relevant information including industry standards and trends, legal issues, and capability gaps.

g) SWAT Medic

It is recommended that the team have medics that are trained to conduct operations with the team in the “hot zone”. Some teams will use a law enforcement officer that is a member of the team and provide them with EMS training. Other teams will select current EMS personnel to work with the team and provide them with SWAT training. There are even some teams that have a full time doctor who responds with team.

h) Lead Specialty Munitions Operator

Although all members of the team should be trained and certified with the capability to employ specialty munitions in the team’s inventory, it is recommended that the team identify one operator to specialize in this area. Specialty munitions include any impact or chemical munitions that the team has access to. The Lead Specialty Munitions Operator will be responsible for inventory of specialty munitions, ensuring that all members of the team conduct regular documented training with the munitions, and will work with the Team Leader to identify and fill any capability gaps.

i) Negotiator

This person often belongs to another unit separate from a SWAT team but some team structures utilize SWAT operators as negotiators. This person usually receives specialized training in how to deal with distraught people or people in distress. They must possess the ability to communicate and have a tremendous amount of patience and a calm demeanor. It is recommended that the SWAT unit conduct regular training with the crisis negotiators – including scenario based training.

j) SWAT K9

A SWAT canine should be specially trained to work in close proximity to other SWAT officers while conducting vehicle interdictions, building entries, etc. It is not recommended to just put a “regular” patrol canine into a SWAT mission due to the atmosphere/environment or operational tempo they will be exposed to.

5. Critical Skills and Capabilities

SWAT teams consist of individuals with **specialty skills**. The team should possess the capability to respond to any reasonably anticipated incident. Regardless of the size and resources of the individual agency, there are specific key positions and **critical skills** which are recommended for all teams.

a) Mission Analysis: Analysis and Determination of Legal Standing, Risk Assessment, and Appropriate Deployment

SWAT officers must be capable of analyzing a request for tactical support and determining whether the team has legal standing to respond and whether it is appropriate for the SWAT team to be used in this response. Some courts have decided that the utilization of a SWAT team, in and of itself, represents a use of force and must be objectively reasonable and necessary. SWAT officers must be capable of reviewing warrants and must be capable of articulating the legal standing that is guiding the law enforcement response. A SWAT team’s SOPs should clearly define the procedure for determining whether the team should respond to certain types of incident and should clearly define who, within the team’s chain of command, has the authority to deploy the team.

b) Intelligence Gathering and Analysis

SWAT officers must be capable of utilizing a variety of sources to collect intelligence about persons that are the focus of an operation and about locations where the operation will be conducted. SWAT officers must also be capable of conducting effective surveillance and reconnaissance operations to collect and develop specific information. This information must be documented in a useful format and must be analyzed for actionable intelligence and other specific information that will enable the team to effectively and safely meet the operational objective.

c) Operational Planning

SWAT officers must be capable of formulating a safe and effective operational plan. This involves describing the current situation including the team's legal standing and justification for deployment, suspect information, location information, and other law enforcement units involved. The plan should clearly define the mission of the team and the operational objectives, sometimes in the order of priority if there are multiple objectives. The plan will describe the execution of the operation in sufficient detail that all team members understand their role and the roles of other officers that are involved. Any specific equipment or vehicles that will be used should be described, as well as any special instructions for dealing with injuries and for handling prisoners. The plan should also include the chain of command during various phases of the operation and any specific information about communications. If possible, this plan will be in a written format and will be prepared prior to the operation. When responding to in-progress incidents, the team should utilize a pre-prepared operational planning form and checklist to ensure that critical information is developed, captured, and recorded.

d) Small Unit Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures

SWAT officers should have a fundamental capability to perform as a member of a team during various common mission profiles. Essentially, all SWAT officers should be capable of operating as part of a containment perimeter, as part of an entry team, during a vehicle assault, and when conducting a search of a woodland or rural area.

- (1) Containment Operations. When responding to critical in-progress incidents, the first concern is often establishing a safe and effective containment perimeter. Officers must have the knowledge, skills and abilities to establish and confirm visual and physical containment, determine fields of fire and observation, plan for emergency contingencies, develop an arrest plan, and develop an emergency entry plan.
- (2) Structure Clear/CQB. SWAT officers should be competent when operating as a member of the team during structure search and clearing operations. This includes deliberate search techniques as well as dynamic search techniques. In addition to understanding the fundamentals, the SWAT officer must be competent at executing emergency procedures and immediate action drills.

- (3) Vehicle Assaults. Many high risk incidents involve suspects in and around vehicles. SWAT officers must be capable of safely and effectively conducting vehicle assault operations. This will certainly involve small passenger vehicles, it should include medium vehicles such as school busses, and may include large vehicles such as planes or trains depending on the jurisdiction.
- (4) Woodland Operations. Whether a team is from an urban or a rural jurisdiction, there will likely be wooded areas within their area of operations. SWAT officers must be capable of functioning as a member of the team during searches of wooded areas.
- e) Firearms Proficiency. SWAT officers are expected to be experts with all assigned weapons. This includes any projectile weapon, lethal or less lethal, that the officer may be expected to operate. SWAT officers absolutely must dedicate adequate time and effort to developing expertise with all assigned weapons. This expertise must be measured during reality based training scenarios rather than simply during static range qualification.
- f) Breaching

Although a SWAT team may have one or two officers that are breaching specialists, all officers on the team must be capable of effectively utilizing basic breaching equipment. The level of basic capability will be determined by what methods of entry the team commonly uses.

 - (1) Mechanical. All SWAT officers should be capable of using common mechanical breaching tools such as a battering ram, bolt cutters, halligan tool, sledge hammer, and other mechanical tools.
 - (2) Ballistic. If the team utilizes ballistic breaching techniques that involve specialized breaching rounds fired from a 12 gauge shotgun, then all members should conduct regular training on this technique. It is recommended that any team member that is expected to utilize ballistic breaching rounds receive documented training and certification with the equipment in accordance with manufacturer specifications and team SOPs.

- (3) Energetic/Explosive. Although the officers that construct and place explosive breaching charges have been certified through specialized training, all members of the team must be trained to properly and safely handle explosives in an emergency and how to participate as a member of the team during explosive breaching operations.
- (4) Pneumatic/Hydraulic. “Jamb Spreaders” and other hydraulic tools require basic training to use properly and effectively.
- (5) Thermal. This is a method of entry that is similar to explosive breaching in that it requires specialized training and equipment. If the team has this capability all members should be trained on emergency handling procedures and how to effectively support thermal breaching operations.
- (6) Vehicle Push/Pull. Using a ram on a vehicle or using pull straps and hooks attached to a vehicle is technically a version of mechanical breaching. If the team adopts this capability, all members of the team should be trained to perform the relevant tasks. The use of the vehicle introduces the possibility of a person getting struck or run over – either an officer or member of the public – so all team members must understand the risks and procedures.

g) Less Lethal Munitions

Although a SWAT team may have one or two officers that are less lethal munitions specialists, all officers on the team must be capable of effectively utilizing common less lethal munitions and operating in a chemical irritant environment. It is recommended that any team member that is expected to operate this equipment receive documented training and certification with the equipment in accordance with manufacturer specifications and team SOPs.

h) Defensive and Control Techniques

The environment that SWAT officers will likely utilize empty hand defensive and control techniques is different than that of the typical patrol officer. SWAT officers are often encumbered by significantly more equipment than a patrol officer and the SWAT officer will usually be required to maintain control of a shoulder fired weapon while employing defense and control measures. Control and arrest techniques should be practiced regularly and incorporated into the team’s regular scenario based training.

i) Tactical Emergency Casualty Care

SWAT officers, by assignment, will be operating in the “hot zone” and therefore will often not have medical support immediately available. SWAT officers must be capable of rendering aid to themselves and to others in order to control massive hemorrhage and protect the airway of any injured person. This capability will require both training and equipment such as individual first aid kits (IFAKs).

j) Specialty Equipment Operation

SWAT officers should be capable of operating any specialty equipment in the team’s inventory. During real world operations, it is usually not possible to depend on one or two officers to conduct certain tasks and everyone on the team must be capable of performing them. This would include pole cameras, fire extinguishers, surveillance equipment, area task lighting, ballistic shields, and distraction devices.

k) Specialty Vehicle Operation

Although a SWAT team may have one or two officers that are normally assigned to operate the team’s specialty vehicles or drive during vehicle based operations, all officers on the team must be capable of effectively operating all team vehicles when necessary. This may include safe operation of an armored vehicle or safe operation of an unmarked vehicle during protective security motorcade operations.

l) Environment Specific Skills and Abilities

Not all teams will have these capabilities, but if they do then all members will require training in relevant knowledge, skills, and abilities.

(1) Vertical/High Angle. If a SWAT team’s jurisdiction contains a large number of multi-story buildings, it may be beneficial to develop the capability of insertion and rescue through the use of rappelling techniques.

(2) Air Mobile. An aircraft can be a huge asset to a SWAT team, especially a rotary wing aircraft that is capable of landing or hovering in order to deploy or recover SWAT officers. Some larger teams that have a state-wide

jurisdiction rely on aircraft to quickly respond to critical incidents.

- (3) Waterborne. Agencies that have a significant presence of water and of boating activities may need to develop various waterborne capabilities within their SWAT unit. This may include small boat operations, boarding and securing of small craft, and reconnaissance or insertion through swimming or scuba techniques.
- (4) CBRNE Operations. Most SWAT teams will have the capability to deliver chemical irritants and to operate in an environment contaminated by chemical irritants. Some SWAT units may need to develop the capability to respond to incidents that involve deadly chemicals or biological hazards, or radiological hazards. This will typically be due to the specific types of industry that is present within the team's jurisdiction.

D. Selection of Team Members⁸

A SWAT unit as a law enforcement team whose members are **selected**, trained, and equipped to resolve critical incidents and to execute high risk law enforcement operations that may exceed the capabilities of first responders or investigative units.

Due to the nature of the duties which SWAT teams must fulfill, departments must develop requirements for the selection of its SWAT members. It is recommended that the requirements be job related and validated by either the profession and/or agency. The agency should have a written policy regarding the selection of SWAT officers that describes the selection process. It is recommended that a SWAT selection process should include all of the following evaluation criteria.

1. Physical Ability

SWAT members are required to perform extraordinary tasks while carrying, sometimes heavy, equipment without it severely affecting their decision making skills and/or physical ability to perform tasks. It is recommended that a SWAT selection process include both a physical abilities test and a physical fitness test.

a) Physical Abilities Testing

Physical abilities refers to actual job tasks that can be described and effectively evaluated. This is similar to the NC Police Officer's Physical Abilities Test (POPAT) that all BLET students

are required to complete. A SWAT officer's physical abilities test can be developed in a similar way. It is recommended that the POPAT be used as a starting point, as it is already validated through the training and standards commission. Using the same method and reasoning, SWAT specific abilities can be added to the POPAT or elements of the POPAT can be modified to more directly reflect the abilities required of a SWAT officer. The National Tactical Officer's Association has also published a SWAT Physical Fitness Qualification Test that could be adopted as-is or modified to fit the needs of a particular agency.

b) Physical Fitness Testing

Physical fitness testing refers to tests that evaluate aerobic performance, anaerobic performance, muscular endurance, maximal strength, flexibility, and body composition. These tests can and should be used as long as they are shown to be job specific and scientifically validated. There are a wide range of physical fitness tests in existence, but the tests developed by the Cooper Institute for Aerobic Research remain the most validated and standardized.

2. Firearms Proficiency

Though most individuals can be trained in weapons proficiency, a minimum proficiency test should be developed by each agency. The intent is to identify whether or not the applicant has reached an acceptable level of mastery of the fundamentals of firearms marksmanship and weapon handling with their issued firearms.

a) Weapon Qualification

Selection should include the basic qualification course for any firearms that are issued to all applicants.

b) Practical Combat or Stress Fire Course

Selection should also include a practical combat course that requires the applicant to operate the firearm in a variety of positions, safely carry the firearm from place to place, reload the firearm, and engage a variety of targets including some discrimination or decision-based targets. This course may also place the applicant under self-imposed stress by including a time element to the scoring.

3. Oral Board or Interview

The selection process should include some form of standardized interview. The format and questions should be determined in advance and recorded so that every applicant is faced with the same questions.

a) Composition

Like any formal process, it is recommended that the members of the board represent a distribution of gender, race and ethnicity. If possible, at least some members of the board should be current or former members of SWAT in order to appropriately form and direct any follow up questions. Some agencies may wish to invite members of a SWAT unit from a different agency to participate in the process.

b) Focus

The focus of the interview should include issues such as why does the officer want to work on the SWAT unit, how has the officer prepared, and have they considered the impacts to their private life. The interview should also develop the applicant's knowledge and perspective on use of force, team work, training, and common law enforcement tactics. The questions and the interview process will also enable the board to evaluate the applicant's maturity and professionalism.

4. Work History

Each applicant's work history should be reviewed and evaluated to determine levels of knowledge, experience, education, training, and dependability. This may be accomplished through a review of the applicant's official personnel file and through an interview with the applicant's current supervisor. Specific areas of interest should be considered such as frequency of citizen complaints, frequency of motor vehicle accidents, judgment, work record, written communications, and sick leave usage.

5. Psychological Testing

It is recommended that applicants participate in a psychological evaluation to screen for SWAT team compatibility and to screen for any potential problems. Personality traits that may be examined during a standardized psychological evaluation may include ability to work in a team environment, ability to follow directions, sadistic tendencies, alcohol abuse or dependence, decision making skills, general level of intelligence, and adaptability to unknown circumstances.

E. Training

A SWAT unit as a law enforcement team whose members are selected, **trained**, and equipped to resolve critical incidents and to execute high risk law enforcement operations that may exceed the capabilities of first responders or investigative units.

Once an agency has selected personnel for assignment on the SWAT unit, those personnel must be adequately trained. This training includes initial training and on-going sustainment training. In order to determine what amount of training is adequate, the agency must complete a training needs analysis. This analysis begins with identifying the types of incidents that the team will be required to respond to and what types of mission profiles the team will be expected to be capable of. Once these factors have been identified, then the individual and team competencies that support effective and safe execution of these mission profiles are identified. An acceptable level of competence with these individual and team skills must be identified. A method for measuring and documenting this competence must also be identified. This analysis will support the creation of the initial training and certification process as well as the creation of the annual and long range training plans for the team.

1. Initial Training

Initial training refers to the basic training that a new member of the SWAT unit receives. Initial training also refers to the basic training that a team receives or conducts when developing a capability that they have not demonstrated competence with previously. For example, a team that has historically not been trained or equipped for conducting hostage rescue is directed by their agency to take on that capability.

a) Basic Certified Training

- (1) Basic SWAT. At a minimum, new members should attend a basic SWAT course that provides an introduction to the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to operate as a member of a SWAT team during execution of common mission profiles. It is recommended that this basic course be a minimum of 40 hours and should be delivered by a recognized professional law enforcement training organization. Basic SWAT training should include, at a minimum, an overview of SWAT operations, firearms use during tactical operations, building clearing (CQB), legal issues related to SWAT operations, tactical emergency casualty care, vehicle assaults, woodland operations, and operational planning.

- (2) Additional Initial Certified Training. It is also recommended that, if possible, new SWAT officers attend certified training in any specific knowledge, skills, or abilities areas that their team is expected to have capabilities with. For example, members may attend Tactical HAZMAT, High Risk Warrant Service, Barricade Incident Resolution, Hostage Rescue, Tactical Rail Operations, Ballistic Breaching, Protective Security Operations, or other specific certified courses that are identified during the training needs analysis.

b) Field Training

- (1) New SWAT Officer Checklist. It is recommended that the SWAT team create a checklist of individual knowledge, skills, and abilities required by the new SWAT officer. The new SWAT officer should be assigned a training officer that is a senior member of the team. The training officer should be tasked with ensuring that the new officer demonstrates competence with all listed items on the checklist.
- (2) Probationary Period. New SWAT officers should be selected to assignment to the team on a probationary status. This probationary status should be of a standardized duration according to team SOPs. During this time, the new SWAT officer is expected to demonstrate competence with core individual and team capabilities, and is expected to demonstrate dependability, maturity, and professionalism in the conduct of training and operations with the team. This time also enables the new SWAT officer to assess their own capability and the actual impacts that the SWAT assignment may have on their personal and professional life.

c) Documented Competency

New SWAT officers, existing SWAT officers, and the team as a whole should all be required to demonstrate competency with identified individual knowledge and team skills and abilities. This competency can be measured through a combination of individual assessment tests and scenario based assessments for team capabilities. This competency should be conducted initially for new members or when the team is taking on a new capability, and should also be done annually as a matter of re-certification of

competency. This process should be documented as a way of supporting the current and up to date competence of individuals on the team as well as the team as a whole.

2. Sustainment Training

It is important for agency leadership to recognize that SWAT training must be on-going. Knowledge and within the SWAT profession is constantly being updated and officers must maintain awareness of current best practices. Skills and abilities are perishable and must be practiced regularly to maintain proficiency.

a) Core Competencies

All members of the team must conduct monthly training in order to maintain competency with all individual and team skills identified in the training needs analysis. Depending on the specific capabilities that must be maintained by a team, individual members should conduct between 16 and 40 hours of training per month. Some teams that are required to maintain additional specialized capabilities such as waterborne or high angle operations may need to conduct more than 40 hours of training per month. It is important to let the training needs analysis drive the training schedule rather than attempting to maintain proficiency with an arbitrary number of training hours.

b) Specialty Assignments

Any members of the team that have specialty certifications or skills should conduct monthly training to maintain the required individual and team skills associated with that specialty skill. This training should be in addition to the monthly core competency training that the officer conducts with the rest of the team. For example, if a member of the SWAT team is expected to maintain all core competencies and to function as a sniper, then that team member should complete the 16 to 40 hours of training with the team and also complete an additional 8 to 16 hours of sniper specific training each month.

3. Documentation

Documentation of training is critical. SWAT teams routinely participate in high risk operations and utilize unusual equipment to address critical incidents. If an officer or a citizen is injured during the conduct of a SWAT operation, one of the first requests from the agency leadership and from outside counsel will likely be training records.

a) New SWAT Officer Certification

It is recommended that a team SOP identifies a formal certification process for new SWAT officers. This might include a battery of required certified training courses and a checklist of individual and team knowledge, skills, and abilities. The completion of this training and this checklist should be documented and kept in the new SWAT officer's personnel file.

b) Annual and Long Range Training

Team leadership should create a long range training plan and an annual training plan to ensure that all individual and team capabilities are maintained and evaluated. The execution of this training plan should include relevant documentation such as who attended training, what training was conducted, what lesson plans or resources were referred to, what lessons were learned, and tactics, techniques, or procedures that were implemented, updated or improved.

F. SWAT Team Equipment¹⁰

A SWAT unit as a law enforcement team whose members are selected, trained, and **equipped** to resolve critical incidents and to execute high risk law enforcement operations that may exceed the capabilities of first responders or investigative units.

Recognizing individual agency resources and limitations, SWAT teams require some specialized equipment for safety and effectiveness during training and operations. Just as an agency should conduct a training needs assessment, conducting an objective needs and objective capabilities assessment is the first step in determining what equipment a SWAT team needs.¹¹

1. Basic Individual Equipment

Each member should be equipped with the minimum of tools for the task. This individual equipment should include, at a minimum, appropriate armor, communications equipment, a trauma care kit, issued weapons and related equipment, and safety equipment. This may include the following equipment:

a) Basic required equipment:

- (1) Utility Duty Uniform - It must be clearly marked to identify the SWAT officer as a law enforcement officer.

- (2) NIJ certified ballistic helmet.
- (3) NIJ certified ballistic armor. It is recommended that SWAT officers be equipped with specialized armor that provides more coverage area than a typical concealable armor vest and includes ballistic plates that will protect the officer against rifle fire.
- (4) Radio communications equipment including headset and push to talk assembly. This should include equipment that is designed to enable communications while wearing APR (gasmask), if the team is issued APRs.
- (5) Individual first aid kit including tourniquet(s), chest seal(s), and dressing/gauze.
- (6) Issued handgun with mounted light, optics, and magazines. A weapon mounted light is considered mandatory for operational use of the handgun. Weapon mounted optics will dramatically improve the safety and effectiveness of the handgun.
- (7) Issued shoulder fired weapon with sling, mounted light, optics, and magazines. A sling and a weapon mounted light is considered mandatory for operational use of the shoulder fired weapon. Weapon mounted optics will dramatically improve the safety and effectiveness of the shoulder fired weapon.
- (8) Pistol belt/load bearing belt with holster and accessories capable of retaining all necessary equipment during dynamic movement.
- (9) Appropriate footwear that stabilizes the ankle.
- (10) Impact resistant eye protection (wrap around glasses or goggles).
- (11) Ear protection that can be worn operationally and integrates with communications equipment.
- (12) Protective gloves.
- (13) Protective knee pads.

- (14) Handheld flashlight.
- (15) Restraints (handcuffs and/or cable ties)
- (16) Sniper: Precision rifle with telescopic sight

b) Optional individual equipment:

- (1) Air purifying respirator (APR) with approved filter element for anticipated environmental contaminants. A team that is responsible for resolving barricade incidents requires chemical munitions and the capability to operate in a chemical environment.
- (2) Less lethal force option (unless included in team issued equipment).
- (3) Canteen/Hydration System
- (4) Extra batteries
- (5) Knife/Multi-Tool
- (6) Watch
- (7) Writing instrument and writing note pad.
- (8) Fire retardant head, neck, face protection (firefighter's balaclava).

2. Team Equipment

a) Common Team Equipment

Depending on mission profiles that the team will be capable of, the following equipment should be readily available to all members and should be capable of being efficiently deployed to an incident location, if possible.

- (1) Deployment vehicle
- (2) Mirrors/Pole Mirrors or pole cameras

- (3) Door wedges, softwood or rubber
- (4) Chemical irritants and delivery systems (hand delivered and/or launched)
- (5) Less lethal impact munitions and launcher
- (6) Fire suppression/fire extinguisher
- (7) Breaching equipment depending on team capabilities
 - a) Ram
 - b) Bolt Cutters
 - c) Sledge Hammers
 - d) Pry Tools
 - e) Break and Rake Tools
 - f) Pull Hooks and Straps
 - g) Breaching Shotgun (dedicated)
 - h) Powered Saw, Torches, etc.
 - i) Hydraulic Cutter/Spreader
- (8) NIJ Level III and Level IV ballistic shields.
- (9) Smoke Munitions
- (10) Noise Flash Distraction Devices with deployment pole

b) Specialty Team Equipment

Depending on some specialty team capability, the following equipment should be available to the team for efficient deployment.

- (1) Night Vision Equipment with required weapon accessories
- (2) Fixed and Extension ladders for access or for Vehicle Assaults
- (3) Rappelling equipment
- (4) Casualty evacuation and medical kits
- (5) Armored Deployment/Rescue Vehicle

- (6) Robot
- (7) Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) or “Drone”
- (8) CBRNE Protective Equipment

G. Elements of Successful SWAT Operations

Special operations are planned around dangerous circumstances and events. The Elements of a Successful SWAT Operations are listed below:

1. Mission and Risk Assessment

Given that SWAT units are, “trained, and equipped to resolve critical incidents and to execute high risk law enforcement operations that may exceed the capabilities of first responders or investigative units”, the team must be able to assess the level of potential risk in a given incident or operation and determine if use of the SWAT unit is reasonable and necessary. If it is determined that use of the SWAT unit is reasonable, then the team must be capable of identifying operational objectives and parameters.

2. Intelligence Gathering

The team must gather sufficient information about the suspects and the locations involved to enable proper operational planning. Intelligence gathering includes searches of data bases, interviewing investigators and other law enforcement personnel, interviewing witnesses and victims, conducting surveillance and reconnaissance operations, and documenting and analyzing all of the information that is collected.

3. Operational Planning

The team must be able to use the information collected to design an operational plan that has a high probability of meeting operational objectives while minimizing risk. The operational planning will develop the manner in which all phases of mission execution (below) will be conducted and will develop plans to respond to any reasonably anticipated contingencies that may occur. This will aid in determining what the personnel and equipment needs will be as well as what conditions will promote operational success.

4. Briefing

All personnel that will participate in the operation must be assembled and briefed on the operational plan. The briefing must be sufficient to explain to all personnel what the legal standing is, what the operational objectives are, and any relevant information about people and locations involved in the operation. The briefing must also describe all the actions that will be taken by all personnel during each phase of execution as well as any contingency plans. Any specialized individual or team equipment that will be necessary must be identified. The briefing should also allow for any questions to be answered, clarifications to be made, and any recommendations for improvement to be made and considered.

5. Mission Execution

The team must have a sufficient number of properly trained personnel that are equipped with the tools that are needed to promote a high probability of success during all of the following phases of execution.

a) Movement/Infiltrate

The method and coordination of team assets moving from the staging area or police station to the target area.

b) Contain/Immobilize

In order for law enforcement assets to be effectively utilized to resolve an incident or secure an objective, the target area must be contained and/or immobilized.

c) Approach

The tactical maneuver that takes a SWAT element from a covered and concealed location to the target area, structure, or vehicle. This includes being prepared for contingencies such as an officer down, shots fired, or a sudden change in mission priorities.

d) Breach

In order to secure a target structure or vehicle, the team must create an entry point. This includes being prepared for contingencies such as an alternate, delayed, fouled or failed breach.

e) Maneuver/Enter/Search/Secure/Clear

The tactics, techniques, and procedures utilized during CQB, vehicle assaults, or open area searches.

f) Reorganize/Consolidate

Actions that the team will conduct on the objective once the target area, structure, or vehicle is secure. This includes prisoner control, interior security, or exterior security.

g) Withdraw

The tactical maneuver that enables the team to move from the target area to a covered and concealed location while maintaining security and accounting for all personnel and equipment.

h) Extract/Exfiltrate

The method and coordination of team assets moving from the target area to the staging area or police station.

6. Debrief¹²

A deliberate process that enables personnel involved in the operation to explain their actions and observations during the mission execution phase. The team leader and/or commander is seeking information about what the team should sustain and what the team should improve.

a) Sustain

A few key actions or conditions that supported operational success should be identified. These actions or conditions should be clearly defined and the reason(s) that they supported operational success should be made clear to the team. If appropriate, these actions should be included in future training and operational practice.

b) Improve

A few key issues that complicated operational success or increased risk should be identified. These issues should be clearly defined and the reason(s) that they complicated operational success or increased risk should be made clear to the team. Solutions to these issues should be identified, whether the solutions be acquisition of training, equipment, personnel, or capability. If appropriate, these solutions should be incorporated into future training and operational practice.

7. Design and Implement Training and Procedures

Training plans should include lessons learned during live operations – including the actions that should be sustained or issues that need improvement. Lessons learned from live operations may also lead to revisions of procedures. As appropriate, this training and any procedural improvements should be incorporated into policy and SOP documents.

III. Conclusion

A. Summary

We have discussed the general guidelines for the selection of SWAT team members. The numerous key positions within a SWAT team were outlined and emphasis was placed on ensuring that the team is sufficiently staffed and that each member is capable of performing all core competencies within the team's required operational mission profiles. This lesson plan listed recommended equipment which should be provided for the individual officer, the team and specialty items which are usually dependent upon budgetary restraints, and requirements of the team. Finally, this lesson plan listed and described the components of successful SWAT operations.

1. Accurately describe history and development of SWAT units in the US including the definition, historical development, and recent issues related to SWAT.
2. Accurately describe considerations related to SWAT operations including the purpose of SWAT teams, common operation types, and common operational profiles.
3. Correctly discuss considerations for SWAT team composition including staffing levels, mutual aid or regional membership, full time or part time assignments, key staffing positions, and critical skills and capabilities.
4. Accurately discuss considerations when selecting SWAT team members including physical abilities, firearm proficiency, performance during a formal interview, a review of work history, and psychological testing.
5. Completely describe considerations for training a SWAT team including initial training, sustainment training, and documentation of training.
6. Correctly list and explain recommended individual and team equipment needed for a SWAT team.
7. Identify, discuss, and list in the correct sequence the seven (7) elements of successful SWAT operations.

B. Questions from Class

C. Closing Statement

The purpose of this block of instruction was to introduce the new SWAT officer to the many considerations involved in selecting, training, and equipping a team. This class will provide the context to support training throughout the rest of this course. This overview of SWAT operations lesson plan can also serve as a resource for SWAT officers and SWAT leadership when analyzing their current status and capability at their agency. The overall goal is to promote professionalism and capability within the SWAT community throughout the State.

NOTES

³ NTOA, 12.

⁴ CA POST, 7.

⁵ ACLU, 12 – 21.

⁶ CMPD SWAT, 2021.

⁷ Mattoon and Wallace, 119 – 120.

⁸ Snow, 25-28.

¹⁰ Snow, 9 – 10.

¹¹ Sanow, 1.

¹² Howe, 155-156.

NCJA Review Copy --- For Reference Only

TITLE:	Firearms Use in Tactical Operations
Lesson Purpose:	To introduce to the law enforcement officer fundamentals associated with deploying firearms during SWAT operations.
Training Objectives:	At the end of this block of instruction, the participant will be able to achieve the following objectives in accordance with information received during the instructional period: 1. Correctly describe firearms safety issues including the cardinal rules of firearms handling, and safety issues related to both operational handling and training. 2. Accurately describe the role of the handgun during SWAT operations. 3. Accurately describe considerations for the use of a rifle or submachine gun during SWAT operations including understanding zero and trajectory, height over bore and bore clearance, and the 50/200 zero. 4. Correctly describe the considerations for use of a shotgun during SWAT operations including as a lethal defensive weapon, for delivery of impact and chemical munitions, use of slugs, and during ballistic breaching. 5. Accurately identify considerations for the use of weapon mounted lights including their purpose and their selection. 6. Accurately identify considerations for the use slings on shoulder fired weapons including sling design and sling carry positions. 7. Correctly describe considerations for the use of weapon mounted optics including the purpose of optics, the various designs of optics, and the importance of back up iron sights. 8. Describe the proper fundamentals of marksmanship and demonstrate their proper application during a series of controlled drills on the firing range

including stance, natural point of aim, sight alignment and sight picture, trigger control, breathing, follow through, and handgun specific fundamentals.

9. Properly describe and demonstrate elements of various shooting positions including standing, kneeling, prone, and unconventional shooting positions.
10. Correctly describe and demonstrate firearms ready positions including attributes of ready positions, depressed muzzle, low ready, low port, high ready, and high port.
11. Correctly describe and demonstrate proper firearms handling including the workspace, loading, unloading, empty gun reloads, and tactical reloads.
12. Accurately describe and demonstrate clearances of common malfunctions including simple malfunctions and immediate action, complex malfunctions and remedial action, and catastrophic malfunctions.
13. Properly describe instances when a transition to a secondary firearm is recommended and, in a range setting, successfully conduct a transition to secondary including an emergency transition and a tactical transition.
14. Accurately describe and demonstrate considerations for shooting on the move including pivots, turns, forward movement, rearward movement and lateral movement.
15. Correctly describe and demonstrate, in the correct sequence, the six steps of the Pre Operational Weapons Checklist.
16. Correctly describe, in the correct sequence, each of the four steps in the Pre-Engagement Sequence, demonstrate the sequence in a training environment, and explain how each step in the sequence can be optimized.

17. Accurately describe reactive shooting and explain the impacts on reaction time and sight picture, considerations for handguns or shoulder fired weapons, and training for reactive shooting
18. Correctly describe, in the correct sequence, each of the four steps in the Post Engagement Sequence, and demonstrate the sequence in a training environment.
19. Accurately describe the Cover/Covering Procedure and demonstrate the procedure during live fire range exercises.
20. Correctly describe considerations for operations in low light conditions including reading the light, operating from the lowest level of light, light and move, and dominate with light.
21. Correctly explain considerations related to, and demonstrate proper technique when, shooting and manipulating a firearm with a gasmask on.

Hours: Ten (10) Hours

Instructional Method: Lecture, Demonstration, Practical Exercise

Testing Requirements: Pre-Test and Post-Test

Training Environment: Academic Classroom
Firing Range

Materials Required: Pen/Pencil and Notebook
Tactical Kit
Long Gun and Handgun
Eye/Ear protection with billed cap
500 rounds handgun practice ammunition
500 rounds Long Gun practice ammunition
Gas mask with filter

Training Aids: Computer
PowerPoint Presentation
Paper Targets

References:

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Date Revised: January 2021

TITLE: Firearms Use in Tactical Operations

I. Introduction

A. Opening Statement

Firearms use in tactical operations requires techniques seldom taught in basic or in-service firearms courses. SWAT Operators must be familiar with a variety of weapon systems and tactics to employ them and they must know how to properly use the tools that are commonly part of those systems.

In the real world SWAT Operators function under a high level of stress and usually under the worst possible conditions. During a typical entry operators will always be faced with a “reactive response.” The Operator must be able to discriminate between hostile and non-hostile targets and must be able to react accordingly. In addition, operators must make sure that the level of force in which they use would be considered reasonable and within the limitations of the law.

NOTE: This block of instruction will not address NCGS 1401-d2 as it relates to the Use of Deadly Force. This topic is addressed during annual in-service training and should be outlined in your departments SOP. This block of instruction offers suggestions only and does not replace the guidelines set forth in your agencies SOP.

B. Training Objectives

1. Correctly describe firearms safety issues including the cardinal rules of firearms handling, and safety issues related to both operational handling and training.
2. Accurately describe the role of the handgun during SWAT operations.
3. Accurately describe considerations for the use of a rifle or submachine gun during SWAT operations including understanding zero and trajectory, height over bore and bore clearance, and the 50/200 zero.
4. Correctly describe the considerations for use of a shotgun during SWAT operations including as a lethal defensive weapon, for delivery of impact and chemical munitions, use of slugs, and during ballistic breaching.
5. Accurately identify considerations for the use of weapon mounted lights including their purpose and their selection.
6. Accurately identify considerations for the use of slings on shoulder fired weapons including sling design and sling carry positions.

7. Correctly discuss considerations for the use of weapon mounted optics including the purpose of optics, the various designs of optics, and the importance of back up iron sights.
8. Discuss the proper fundamentals of marksmanship and demonstrate their proper application during a series of controlled drills on the firing range including stance, natural point of aim, sight alignment and sight picture, trigger control, breathing, follow through, and handgun specific fundamentals.
9. Properly describe and demonstrate elements of various shooting positions including standing, kneeling, prone, and unconventional shooting positions.
10. Correctly describe and demonstrate firearms ready positions including attributes of ready positions, depressed muzzle, low ready, low port, high ready, and high port.
11. Correctly describe and demonstrate proper firearms handling including the workspace, loading, unloading, empty gun reloads, and tactical reloads.
12. Accurately describe and demonstrate clearances of common malfunctions including simple malfunctions and immediate action, complex malfunctions and remedial action, and catastrophic malfunctions.
13. Properly discuss instances when a transition to a secondary firearm is recommended and, in a range setting, successfully conduct a transition to secondary including an emergency transition and a tactical transition.
14. Accurately describe and demonstrate considerations for shooting on the move including pivots, turns, forward movement, rearward movement and lateral movement.
15. Correctly describe and demonstrate, in the correct sequence, the six steps of the Pre Operational Weapons Checklist.
16. Correctly describe, in the correct sequence, each of the four steps in the Pre-Engagement Sequence, demonstrate the sequence in a training environment, and explain how each step in the sequence can be optimized.
17. Accurately describe reactive shooting and explain the impacts on reaction time and sight picture, considerations for handguns or shoulder fired weapons, and training for reactive shooting
18. Correctly describe, in the correct sequence, each of the four steps in the Post Engagement Sequence, and demonstrate the sequence in a training

environment.

19. Accurately describe the Cover/Covering Procedure and demonstrate the procedure during live fire range exercises.
20. Correctly describe considerations for operations in low light conditions including reading the light, operating from the lowest level of light, light and move, and dominate with light.
21. Correctly explain considerations related to, and demonstrate proper technique when, shooting and manipulating a firearm with a gasmask on.

C. Reasons

This block of instruction incorporates; the fundamentals of marksmanship, combat ready drills, pre and post engagement sequencing, shooting on the move, and many other aspects relevant to tactical team operations utilizing firearms.

II. Body

A. Firearms Safety

1. Four Cardinal Rules of Firearms Safety.

Although typically discussed in the context of law enforcement training at the range, these rules are critically important when any firearm is utilized during real world SWAT operations.

- a) Treat all firearms as if they were loaded. Typically, during SWAT operations, the operator will maneuver with a firearm in hand. It is critical that safe handling skills are learned and practiced. At all times, during training and during real world deployment, the firearm must be handled as if loaded.
- b) Keep the firearm pointed in a safe direction at all times. Muzzle awareness is one of the most critical aspects of safe handling techniques. During a real world deployment of any firearm, the operator must constantly assess what is a safe direction. In real world operations, this rule is more accurately stated as, "Keep the firearm pointed in *the safest direction possible* at all times."
- c) Be aware of your target and what is around, behind and in front of it. Training should include awareness of the environment around the target. Just like any other police officer, the SWAT operator is responsible for every round fired.

- d) Keep your finger off the trigger until you are on target and have decided to fire. Trigger finger discipline is another critical aspect of safe handling techniques. Negligent or Accidental Discharges are nearly always caused by poor trigger finger discipline and these incidents have resulted in tragic results – innocent people and fellow officers have been killed due to unintentional discharges of a police firearm. In addition to the very important considerations that apply to all police officers, SWAT operators are much more likely to go “hands on” with a subject while having a firearm in hand which makes trigger finger discipline even more critical. SWAT operators should identify an “index point” on their firearms to place their trigger finger when not firing the weapon. This index point should be well away from the trigger and should be positioned such that even if the shooter were to make a complete fist with their firing hand, the trigger finger would not contact the trigger. For most semi-automatic pistols this index point is likely to be on the slide of the weapon near the ejection port. For most shoulder fired weapons the index point will be on the receiver well above the trigger and away from the magazine release.

2. Operational

A team member that has unsafe handling habits will unnecessarily endanger other operators and the public. It is critical that proper safety procedures are learned and practiced.

a) Selector

Any weapon that has a safety or a selector lever should be carried with the weapon on “Safe.” The operator should practice selecting a “Fire” mode when making the decision to shoot and a “Safe” mode when making the decision not to shoot.

b) Trigger Finger

The trigger finger should always be kept off of the trigger until the operator has made the decision to shoot and the target is safe to effectively engage. The trigger finger should be positioned at an “index point” on the weapon such that even if the operator experiences a sympathetic contraction or a startle flinch response, there is very little possibility that the trigger could be inadvertently manipulated.

c) Muzzle

Muzzle discipline is a critical habit of safe weapons handling and safe team maneuver. Muzzle discipline works two ways – the one controlling the weapon should never point the muzzle at another operator and another operator should never move in front of the muzzle of a weapon controlled by another teammate. The operator controlling the weapon should always move the weapon to the high port or low port carry position when other teammates are moving in front of the weapon. An operator that wishes to move in front of another teammate should not move until that teammate's weapon is at high port or low port.

d) Position While Covering/Firing

When there is no other operator in the direction that the weapon handler is facing, then it is appropriate for the weapon handler to hold the weapon in a high or low ready position or in a depressed muzzle position if covering a potential threat. If there are other operators in the direction that the weapon handler is facing and the weapon handler must cover beyond that operator or fire their weapon, there are rules of safe weapon employment that must be practiced and made habitual.

(1) Muzzle Beyond Teammate/"Muzzle Before Meat". When moving in close proximity, a weapon handler that wishes to cover or shoot beyond a teammate must have the muzzle of their weapon well beyond the body of their teammate. When shooting in close proximity to other operators the concerns include not only the actual projectile but also the muzzle blast.

(2) Safety Angles for Engagement. When not in close proximity or unable to move the muzzle beyond all teammates prior to taking a shot or covering a threat, then the weapon handler must observe safe margins of engagement – referred to as *safety angles*. An operator can shoot or cover any suspect or area that does not have a non-suspect within 15 degrees. This specifically means that no one the officer means to avoid shooting should be within 15 degrees in any direction of the line of fire.

It is recommended that teams work to establish competence with this margin through training. Teams may initially enforce a 45-degree safety angle during live fire training, and then reduce the angle to 30 degrees when all members of the team demonstrate competence at that level, and finally reduce the angle to 15 degrees for operational

engagements.

15 degrees represents different standoff distances at different ranges. At 100 yards, a 15-degree safety angle would represent just over 25 yards of standoff – or safety margin. This would typically apply during woodland operations, perimeter operations, or other open area or urban operations. At 5 yards, or typical CQB distances, a 15-degree safety angle would represent just over 1 yard of standoff. This is where the typical *one meter from the muzzle* rule comes from – which means an officer should not shoot within one meter (or one yard) from their teammate during CQB.

Although an accurate shot could be fired with less margin than this under ideal conditions, this distance is intended to account for movement of both the target and other operators in the area as well as the potential for shooting under high-stress conditions being less accurate than during optimal conditions. Although this represents a minimum margin for error, the shooting/covering operator should always seek to make this margin as large as possible.

- (3) Move to Safe Position before Shooting/“Earn the Shot”. An operator that intends to shoot or cover a particular location must adhere to the two rules described above. This may require the operator to move into a position that allows adherence to these rules. The operator must “earn the shot” by moving into position to maximize adherence to these rules when possible and communicate to other teammates so that they can move to maximize safety.

3. Training

In addition to the Four Cardinal Rules of Firearms Safety, students will be briefed on any additional administrative safety guidelines and procedures prior to any live fire exercises. Generally, these will include the following:

- a) Report to each range with **unloaded** weapons and magazines. Many range drills will begin with dry fire exercises and/or will require that magazines be loaded a particular way.
- b) Eye and ear protection are required. Some drills will require light ballistic vests and a brimmed hat. Some drills will require tactical ballistic vests and helmets.

- c) Handguns should remain in the holster unless actively involved in a range drill activity.
- d) Shoulder weapons may be carried in a front or rear sling position with the muzzle down or in a low port or high port while moving on and off the range or while not involved in a drill activity. During these carries, the bolt will be locked open and the selector lever will be on "Safe".
- e) Students on the range will want to administratively shoulder a weapon or aim in with a handgun to check optics, sights, or other accessories. If this is necessary, the student must move to a position within 10 feet of a side berm and ensure that no one is between them and the berm when the weapon is being aimed in or otherwise handled.
- f) Finger is outside the trigger guard unless actually firing as dictated by the Four Cardinal Rules of Firearms Safety.
- g) Stay on line while advancing during live fire drills that require shooting on the move. If any student falls behind and is no longer on line, that student shall not fire the drill until that student has caught up and is back on line.
- h) Always listen and obey the commands of the range officer. Do not be afraid to ask questions. There will be drills that are conducted while wearing APRs and other equipment that will make it difficult to hear or understand. Always seek clarity and never fire a weapon when it seems unsafe to do so.
- i) Always identify your target clearly.
- j) In case of a misfire, clear weapon and return on target. Finish drill, if possible. In the event of a squib load, keep weapon pointed down range and notify instructor.
- k) Anyone that observes an unsafe act that endangers anyone has the responsibility to shout "**CEASE FIRE.**"

B. Handgun

"Handguns are defensive weapons and should only be brought into action when long guns have malfunctioned or have exhausted their ammunition supply. There are a few exceptions to this rule."¹ Shoulder fired weapons do typically have larger ammunition capacity, higher power projectiles and therefore more effective

terminal ballistics, and are inherently more accurate. In spite of this, handguns have an important role to play during SWAT operations.

Handguns will typically be carried as a secondary weapon to back up a primary shoulder fired weapon, but there are times that the handgun may be more suitable as a primary weapon during various SWAT operations and when performing certain tasks.

1. Vehicle Assaults

Many tasks involved in vehicle assaults are more easily performed while armed with a handgun. On bus assaults, for example, an operator may be tasked with climbing a ladder and covering a portion of the bus through a window. On small vehicle assaults, it is imperative that the operators establish a downward angle of fire and this is more easily done with a handgun at close range. During the linear assault of a bus the operator may be moving down an aisle while physically controlling and directing occupants and scanning for lethal threats at the same time.

2. Confined Area Clearing

SWAT operators may need to clear a crawl space or attic space and find that the handgun is the only suitable firearm for the task.

3. Low or No Signature Operations

Of course, not all SWAT operations are overt, high visibility operations involving personnel that are wearing external armor and helmets. Many SWAT operations are conducted in plain clothes and are considered either low-signature or no-signature operations. In these cases, a shoulder fired weapon may not be an option at all and the handgun must be carried concealed. These operations may include surveillance, high risk arrest warrant, protective security of an individual or of a venue, counter terrorist, or close cover of an undercover officer.

4. Specialized Task Assignments

During any SWAT operation an operator may be given a specialized task assignment that prevents the carry of a shoulder fired primary weapon. A shield operator may elect to carry two handguns. A primary breacher or other designated tool carrier may choose to carry handguns. When concealment is not an issue but it is impractical to carry a shoulder fired weapon, the operator should consider carrying two handguns so that there is a backup weapon to transition to in the event of a stoppage with the primary handgun.

Handguns are more difficult to master than shoulder fired weapons. With that being said, an operator must be a master of his secondary weapon or handgun. To master anything, one must properly conduct repetitions thousands of times. This means that the most basic and fundamental details are rehearsed at slow speeds until the conscious mind has imprinted the details to the unconscious mind and the operator can conduct the task(s) with little or no conscious thought. The progression is to develop conscious competence and then ultimately, through deliberate practice, subconscious competence.

C. Rifle/Sub-Machine Gun

The shoulder fired weapon is the most accurate weapon available to the SWAT operator and should be considered the primary weapon whenever possible. The enhanced accuracy is due the longer sight radius or use of optics and is due to the fact that the weapon is held securely at multiple points of contact and therefore is less effected by poor trigger manipulation. When the high-risk and high-stress environment of a SWAT operation is taken into account, it is clear that operators will want to deploy with the most stable and accurate weapon possible.

For a rifle/carbine to meet the needs of a typical SWAT operator it will need a short barrel for handling during CQB and while moving in and out of vehicles. Both SMGs and carbines will need to be equipped with a weapon mounted light and an optical sight.

A typical sub-machine gun (SMG) that fires pistol caliber ammunition, is effective from zero to 100 yards. This extended range is due to the fact that it can be held more securely than a handgun and it is normally equipped with better sights or optics. The handgun ammunition – even when fired out of the slightly longer barrel of the SMG – performs essentially the same as when fired out of a handgun and terminal ballistics will suffer at longer ranges.

A carbine that fires rifle caliber ammunition can be effective from zero to 300 yards or more depending on caliber. In order to effectively use the rifle/carbine throughout its effective range, it must be properly zeroed and the shooter must understand how the sights/optics work in relation to the zero setting of the weapon.

1. Understanding Zero

Simply put, zeroing or sighting in a rifle, is the process of adjusting the sights so that they are aligned with the rifle in such a way as to enable the shooter to accurately and repeatedly hit a target from a predetermined distance. Keep in mind that the trajectory of the round will change from different distances, thus affecting the impact area on the target. Whatever sights you use and whatever your habitual shooting distances may be, you should understand the path your bullet will follow. You should

understand not only if you will hit your target at a specific range, but where you will hit the target. The shooter must understand the concept of trajectory.

2. Trajectory

- a. Trajectory is defined as: “The path followed by a projectile flying or an object moving under the action of given forces.” When a bullet is in flight through air or space, two forces have a profound effect on its trajectory – gravity and environmental conditions. The longer the bullet is in flight, the more effect gravity has on pulling the bullet down. Environmental conditions include temperature and wind which can effect trajectory due to drag and/or drift. Drag is always present and causes the projectile to slow down once it leaves the barrel. Wind can blow a projectile off course laterally. The amount of deviation from its intended flight path is determined by how hard the wind is blowing and how efficiently the projectile travels through the air.
- b. Line of Sight is simply explained as: “Where you look is a straight line from your eyes to the target, there is no deviation.”
- c. On the contrary, trajectory is not a straight line. It is more of an arc. Think of spraying water from a garden hose. The further out the water stream goes, the greater the arc as gravity pulls the water to the ground.

3. Height Over Bore

Height over bore - or sight height - refers to how far above the bore of your rifle (barrel) your sights or optic sits. Your sight line is basically an imaginary straight line. Where the bullet trajectory intersects that imaginary line, is the zero of your rifle. Since the trajectory is an arc, the bullet may cross the sight line twice. While the sight line is straight, the barrel is in fact at an angle and is not parallel to the sight line. This is by design of the sights, mounts and optics. Consider that if the sight line were actually parallel to the bore, the two paths would never intersect and therefore you would never achieve a zero.

4. Bore Clearance.

Height over bore can cause a serious issue when the target is visible but the bore (muzzle) is not clear of an obstruction – the rifle operator must practice checking bore clearance when shooting from a covered position.

5. The 50/200 Zero

The “50/200 Zero” refers to a sight/optic setting that enables the point of impact and point of aim to coincide at 50 yards. This also means that the POI and POA will coincide at approximately 200 yards – actually about 225 yards. It is usually easy to establish a very solid zero on the weapon at 50 yards and the most common distances that a SWAT operator will be faced with will be less than 100 yards.

- a. Affords approximately 3-4 inch deviation of point of impact (POI) from 10 yards out to 200 yards depending on ammunition, sight height, and sight radius.
- b. Be aware of height over bore issues. At CQB distances, the POI could be 2 inches lower, depending on optic mount or sights. A precise, “hostage rescue” shot at close range will require the shooter to use a different aiming point – either on the target or within the reticle.

D. Shotgun ²

The shotgun is the most versatile weapon within the SWAT arsenal. Consider the use of a pump shotgun as most special purpose rounds will not properly cycle a semi-automatic shotgun.

1. Use as Primary Lethal Weapon

- a) Loaded with buckshot, the shotgun places multiple high energy projectiles on the target simultaneously. Compared to any firearm that fires a single projectile at a time – even if fired full auto – the shotgun is capable of much faster delivery of lethal force.
- b) Even a short barreled shotgun that has a magazine capacity of four shells of nine pellet buckshot will have 36 projectiles on board.

2. Less-Lethal Impact Munitions (LLIM) Delivery

LLIM rounds can be used in situations and circumstances that would otherwise result in loss of life. They serve as an alternative to lethal force tools but should always be deployed in conjunction with lethal force weapons in the event that they fail or the use of deadly force is justified. LLIM rounds include bean bag rounds, sponge rounds, rubber buckshot or rubber baton rounds, and other specialty rounds.

NOTE: These LLIM rounds can cause serious injury or death if not used according to manufacturer’s recommendations. Prior to any individual SWAT operator being issued LLIM for operational use, it

is important to obtain and document specialized training from the manufacturer or a manufacturer-trained instructor.

3. Slugs

The shotgun can realistically be deployed at an effective range of 50 yards with traditional 12 gauge, 1 ounce slugs. Specialized slugs designed for long range accuracy push the effective range out to 100 yards. To take advantage of this increased effective range, the shotgun should be fitted with rifle sights and/or optics. Slugs can incapacitate vehicle engines and defeat windshield glass more effectively.

4. Chemical Munitions Delivery

The shotgun can be used to deliver chemical munitions by using ferret rounds containing OC, CS or a mixture of the two. The design of many of the rounds currently on the market allow accuracy out to 100 yards and most will penetrate through walls and glass in both structures and vehicles. The deployment of chemical munitions can make an environment unbearable and persuade a hostile subject to surrender or move from a hiding place.

5. Breaching

The shotgun can be used to target hinges, lock hasps, dead-bolts and pad locks. This is referred to as ballistic breaching. The use of special breaching rounds reduce the risk of injury to occupants as well as the operator.

NOTE: Although shotgun breaching can be done without a special breaching barrel, it is strongly recommended that the breaching gun be equipped with a “stand off.” Standoffs prevent an operator from inadvertently shoving the muzzle against the target under duress.

E. Weapon Mounted Lights

Weapon mounted lights have become a necessity on both handgun and long gun. Weapon mounted lights allow the operator to more clearly and easily identify threats or navigate more carefully in low-light settings. While most handgun manufacturers design their handguns with some type of rail, rifle and shotgun mounting solutions are varied and numerous. Proper placement and design of a weapon light should allow the shooter to operate the light with the support hand while in the normal position for shooting.

1. Purpose and Use of Weapon Lights:

- a) Identify/Discriminate. This is the most important reason to mount a weapon light on a duty firearm. Many encounters with potentially armed and dangerous suspects occur at night or inside a dark structure. It is essential that the weapon have a light mounted on it to enable the officer to identify a suspect and to discriminate the level of threat posed by the suspect.
- b) Navigate. When moving in a low light environment and expecting possible contact with an armed and dangerous suspect, the officer may use the weapon light to navigate. Avoid having the light on continuously. This can give your position or approach away.
- c) Search. When searching for a potentially armed and dangerous suspect in a low light environment, the officer may use the weapon light. This may be searching inside a structure or searching outside in a wooded or urban area.
- d) Disorient. At the point that an officer has a suspect at gunpoint and is discriminating threat and/or giving verbal commands, a bright weapon light can be disorienting to the suspect. The light can make it difficult for the suspect to see the officer clearly and therefore can enhance the officer's safety.
- e) Signal³. As officers maneuver in low light environments it can be useful to signal with the weapon light. In combination with radio or verbal communications, the weapon light can assist with identifying the location of other officers.

2. Considerations When Selecting a Weapon Light:

- a) Brightness or Lumens.
 - (1) Lumens, simply explained, is the measure of the brightness of a light source.
 - (2) Generally, "the brighter the better" is the rule of thumb. Consideration must be given to the primary use, however, as too much light can bounce off walls, ceilings, etc. and illuminate the user or teammates to an adversary and can make it more difficult to see under certain circumstances.
 - (3) Light emitting diodes (LED's) are the norm and offer longer bulb life, longer battery life, and increased ruggedness.
- b) Placement of light on long gun.

Whenever possible, try to select a weapon mounted light intended to be used on the weapon system you want it for. Try to avoid using a light intended for a handgun on a rifle and vice-versa. The design of the light is usually matched to the weapon, circumstances and environment it will be used in. For example, a handgun light may not have enough “distance” to see at longer ranges but may provide a larger flood area for up close and smaller areas while a light designed to be mounted on a rifle may have a longer throw or range but narrow beam.

c) Pressure switches/tapes.

- (1) Carefully consider the use of pressure switches for handguns. There are safety issues that should be taken into consideration. A common issue is sympathetic contraction. In other words, most handgun tape switches are activated by the middle finger of the shooting hand and it requires the switch to be squeezed. If the trigger finger is also on the trigger at the same time a person tries to operate the light, both fingers may contract thus causing the trigger finger to press the trigger which could cause a negligent discharge.
- (2) Pressure/tape switches for long guns are a good idea. Since the light will be mounted closer to the muzzle, it allows the operator the ability to activate the light in a more efficient and comfortable manner as opposed to having to reach further out on the forearm of the long gun. Pressure switches also allow for multiple placement locations on the weapon so the operator can place it in an optimized location that is efficient for them. These pressure switches are typically operated with the non-firing hand and therefore do not significantly increase the risk of an unintentional discharge due to sympathetic contraction.

F. Slings

Other than weapon mounted lights, slings are probably the second most important accessory to consider for a long gun. Slings allow the operator to transition to a handgun utilizing the two-handed technique. The long gun can be released and slung, freeing up both hands of the operator which in turns allows him/her to handle suspects or perform certain tasks. An example would be climbing over an obstacle. Carefully consider the various sling options to include manufacturers and how it operates. Each offers distinct advantages and/or disadvantages.

1. Sling Design

A shoulder fired weapon must have a sling. Just as a handgun is retained in a holster, the rifle or shotgun is retained with a sling. Police officers commonly use their hands to perform tasks, including handcuffing suspects, and must be able to maintain control of the rifle with both hands free.

a) Single Point Sling

A single point sling offers great maneuverability when handling the weapon but less control of the weapon when performing tasks that require both hands to be free.

b) Two Point Sling

A two point sling offers less maneuverability when handling the weapon but more control of the weapon when performing tasks with both hands free. An adjustable two point sling can also be used in various shooting positions to assist with achieving a stable position and therefore enhance accuracy at longer ranges.

c) Three Point Sling

Original design was from the HK family of weapon systems. Does not offer great maneuverability or weapon manipulation but does provide several unique sling carry positions.

d) Convertible/Adjustable Sling

Many modern slings are designed to be easily converted from a single point to a two point sling. They are also easily adjusted in length for various shooting positions or sling carry options. These slings will give the operator the best of both sling designs.

2. Sling Carry Positions.

Any tactical sling should allow for the operator to take both hands off the rifle without the rifle dropping to the ground, or even dropping too far down in front of the operator's legs – the rifle should be held by the sling in a position that is close to the low ready position. There will be times when the operator wishes to better secure the rifle in a position that will not interfere with the performance of other tasks – such as climbing, operating a different shoulder fired weapon, or operating a “pole-cam”.

This will typically require some adjustment of the sling system and will be impacted by the type of sling on the rifle.

a) Front Sling Carry.

The operator may choose to leave the sling in the normal position but simply tighten it securely to the body so that it will not swing around when the operator moves. This position is quick to establish but still leaves the rifle in front of the operator where it may interfere with performance of other tasks.

b) Side/Back Sling Carry.

The operator moves the rifle to their side or back and adjusts the sling (or utilizes a “weapons catch” to secure the rifle) so that it will stay in position and will not swing around when the operator moves. This takes longer to accomplish and positions the rifle so that it is not rapidly available to the operator, but it is in a position where it will not interfere with the performance of other tasks. The operator should sling the rifle in a muzzle down orientation so that it is less likely to unintentionally muzzle sweep people during the process or while carried.

G. Optics⁴

The primary advantage of an optic is that it will enable the officer to maintain focus on the suspect to facilitate threat discrimination, rather than requiring the officer to shift focus to an “iron sight” system, during potential deadly force encounters. While some agencies may not be able to equip all firearms with optics, there is no doubting the accuracy and effectiveness an optic can have on a weapon. Do not settle for cheap versions that will be unreliable and will not hold a zero. Research and find an optic from a reputable manufacturer that serves the needs of your agency. Optics can provide similar benefits when mounted on a handgun as well as on a rifle, and optics are becoming more common on handguns.

1. Purpose of Optics

Optics allow an operator to obtain sight alignment rapidly, under stress, and while in less than ideal conditions. This makes the use of the weapon safer for the operator, safer for other officers in the area, safer for non-violent subjects in the area of a police shooting, and safer for the general public.

- a) Obtaining the proper sight alignment/sight picture through iron sights is considered a fine motor skill. Fine motor skills greatly depreciate; if not totally deteriorate, under stressful conditions. Properly utilizing iron sights requires the shooter to align the front and rear sights on the target and to shift the optical focus onto the front sight rather than remaining focused on the potential threat.
- b) The ability to see an illuminated reticle falls closer into the realm of a gross motor skill. The reticle of an optical sight appears in the same optical focus plane as the threat. As result, there is less thinking going on and the cognitive process is faster.
- c) The use of an optic allows the operator to sight the weapon with both eyes open as opposed to using a dominate eye.
- d) All shooters are not equal, some have more “mature” eye sight then others... some must deal with issues such as being right handed and left eye dominate.
- e) In a situation where the operator is firing a shoulder fired weapon and is unable to establish 3 or 4 points of contact with the weapon, as long as the strong hand is gripping the weapon and the reticle is visible through the optic, the weapon can still be fired reasonably accurately.

2. Types of Optics

Optical sights can be separated into three sub- groups:

a) Red Dot Optics

The term “red dot optics” usually refers to either a reflex (reflector) or a holographic sight. A reflex sight has a reticle that is illuminated by LED, fiber optics, tritium, or a combination of sources. A holographic sight has a reticle that is illuminated by a laser diode. Typically, the reflex optic will require less power to run and the holographic sight will have a clearer reticle – although advances in technology and design are making reflex reticles competitive with holographic reticles. Red dot optics are not magnified and are typically used with both eyes open and have unlimited eye relief. Aimpoint, EO Tech, Vortex, Sig Sauer Optics, and Trijicon are some of the more trusted brands.

(1) Open Design (Reflex or Holographic)

These optics typically look like a screen or a window sticking up from a base assembly. These optics can be either reflex or holographic. The window is typically square or rectangular and is larger than a typical tube design optic. The larger window makes the reticle visible in a larger area which can make target acquisition faster and can make the optic more forgiving to head position (such as when wearing a gasmask).

(2) Tube Design (Reflex)

These optics resemble a small scope tube with a lens at each end. The smaller aperture can make reticle acquisition a bit slower and head position is more critical.

b) Prismatic Optics

These optics resemble a small scope tube with a lens at each end but, unlike a red dot optic, can provide for fixed power magnification. Due to the magnification, these scopes have a limited eye relief and head position is critical. Also, some of the advantages of shooting with both eyes open is lost with this optic design and it is more like using a traditional scope. An example is the ACOG by Trijicon.

c) Scope or Telescopic Sight

Variable power, low-magnification optics (scopes) are becoming more popular. They provide a low magnification setting that gives a similar field of view that many tube design red dot optics offer. Plus, the magnification can be increased, aiding in longer range engagements and better accuracy at those longer ranges. Compared to red dot optics, these scopes have limited eye relief and head position is critical. Leupold, Vortex, and Nightforce are good manufacturers to consider.

3. Back Up Iron Sights

No matter what, always have some form of back up iron sights (BUIS). Red dot sights typically require batteries which can fail. Even magnified optics can fail due to broken lenses, loose mounts, etc. Some red dot optics allow for co-witnessing, which means that the iron sights can be seen through the optic. Co-witnessing allows for the use of the iron sights without changing the shooting position or the way the rifle is held. If the optic does not allow for co-witnessing, the optic must be removed to allow

use of traditional iron sights or iron sights must be installed in a different position on the rifle.

H. Marksmanship Fundamentals

Marksmanship is one of the most important aspects of safe and effective use of firearms during SWAT operations. As distances increase, or available target decreases, the fundamentals become more important. SWAT operators must be capable of extremely accurate medium range shooting as well as extremely rapid threat discrimination and accurate short range shooting. The use of the marksmanship fundamentals should be maximized during training so that they become part of the operator's subconscious manipulation of the firearm.

1. Stance

While a proper stance remains an important fundamental for building upon, operators need to realize that most of their shooting will NOT be from a stationary position. The important consideration of the stance is that it provides a solid and stable platform from the waist up from which to operate the firearm. The stance must also enable mobility and balance.⁵

- a) Aggressive-Athletic - A modified isosceles that conditions the operator for easy transitioning to forward, backward and lateral movements.
- b) Chest, hips, and shoulders should be squared to the target to promote a natural point of aim.
- c) Feet are shoulder width apart with the support side foot slightly forward and the strong side foot slightly back. Toes are pointed at the target so that the hips are "squared up" to the direction the weapon is aimed.
- d) The shoulders should be slightly in front of the hips putting body weight forward. Weight is slightly distributed on the front balls of the feet and support side knee. Knees are slightly bent.
- e) Think boxer's stance. "Your fighting stance is your everyday stance, your everyday stance is your fighting stance."⁶

2. Natural Point of Aim⁷

Natural point of aim can be described as "the ideal position your body should be in as to maximize the position as well as to aid in the basic fundamentals of marksmanship." Natural point of aim is achieved by maximizing bone support and muscle relaxation. Simply put, it is a

natural position that allows your body to relax allowing you to spend less energy trying to force your weapon and/or sights on target. It can aid in a quicker return to target as the weapon recoils.

Natural point of aim is maximized in most moving, standing, and kneeling positions by having the shooter's hips perpendicular to the direction of fire. Having the body "squared up" to the target – rather than bladed to the side – will reduce the need for muscular tension to bring the point of aim on target. A simple cue that will tend to properly position the hips during shooting is to orient the toes of both feet towards the target.

3. Sight Alignment and Sight Picture⁸

This is the simple process of aligning the front sight with the rear sight and then superimposing them on the target. You must allow your eyes to shift focus from the sights to the target to ensure proper alignment with the target. When you have decided to fire, the focus should be on the sights, primarily the front sight.

Present the weapon up so that the sights or optic intersects the line of sight between the eyes and the target. This aids in efficient, accurate fire.

a) Threat Focus

In most cases involving a sudden deadly threat at close range, due to the effects of survival stress, the operator is likely to focus more on the threat (Threat Focus) instead of the front sight. In that case, the sights are blurred but should still be visible on the threat. An untrained or inexperienced operator may not even use the sights and simply point or index shoot. This is a dangerous, negligent act in every case other than a "contact shot" when the muzzle of the weapon is in contact with the target. Proper training will cause the operator to always index the sights sufficiently to articulate that each shot was an aimed shot.

b) Optics.

The brain's instinct to force Threat Focus during survival stress is the primary reason that an optic is so effective on defensive firearms – the visual focus remains on the target – the threat – and the reticle of the optic is superimposed within the field of view. This enables the weapon to be effectively aimed while maintaining Threat Focus. Thus, an optic on a police firearm will make the use of that firearm safer, overall, for police officers and for the public

that they serve as every round fired is more likely to be accurately aimed and effectively fired.

c) Eye Relief.

Part of establishing proper sight alignment is using a consistent eye relief. This is the distance from the shooter's eye to the sights or optic. When the eye relief changes, the appearance of the relationship between the sights changes. This can induce aiming errors and can cause misses. Deliberate practice that includes establishing a consistent eye relief is important. Another advantage of optics is that head position and eye relief are less important when using an optic – as long as the reticle is visible on the target, the weapon is effectively aimed.

(1) Handguns. Eye relief is determined by how far the handgun is held from the shooter's eye. Often a shooter will hold the handgun a particular distance from the eye when shooting on the "flat range" and then will do something different when practicing CQB or other tactical maneuvers. The key to consistent eye relief with a handgun is to evaluate stance and positioning during maneuver and practice utilizing positions that promote consistent eye relief.

(2) Shoulder Fired Weapons. Stock or Cheek Weld is the term used to describe where your cheek makes contact with the weapon's buttstock. This determines eye relief. Proper stock weld is a repeatable stock weld. A commonly taught reference point for consistent stock weld, for example, is for the shooter to place their "nose to charging handle."

4. Trigger Control

Proper trigger control refers to the ability to maintain sufficient sight alignment while pressing the trigger.⁹ In other words, you must be able to press the trigger without moving the sights off target. Rob Leatham, a world class competitive shooter and instructor, stated that "Aiming is useless, unless you can pull the trigger without moving the gun." This is true and explains the importance of proper trigger manipulation. Proper trigger manipulation requires the shooter to isolate the movement of the trigger finger from the rest of the hand which requires correct hand placement and correct amount of tension in the grip.

a) Trigger manipulation

- (1) The trigger is pulled or pressed, NEVER jerked or squeezed. The terminology is not critical but what is critical is that the operator manipulate the trigger straight to the rear, in line with the axis of the bore of the weapon. The trigger is pulled or pressed straight to the rear, rather than jerked or squeezed at an off-axis angle.
- (2) Trigger control while firing multiple rounds. From the time the first shot is fired, the trigger finger should not come off of the trigger (until firing is complete). The trigger finger should move only enough to operate the trigger through the necessary range of motion – any more movement than that simply makes proper trigger manipulation more difficult. During training, listen and feel for the sear to re-set with each pull of the trigger – with proper, deliberate practice the correct amount of movement will become a subconscious motor pattern.
- (3) Consistent speed. If the trigger control has eliminated any unnecessary movement, then the trigger finger need not move very fast at all because the actual movement required to fire the weapon is very small. Eliminating unnecessary movement will enable rapid shots to be fired while enabling the operator to manipulate the trigger with a consistent speed.
- (4) Continuous motion. Some weapons have a long trigger pull and others have a very short trigger pull. Once the operator has “taken up the slack” in the trigger and verified the sight alignment, then the trigger pull or trigger press should be executed in one continuous motion of steadily increasing pressure.

b) Jerking the Trigger

This refers to pulling the trigger in such a way that it disturbs the alignment of the sights and causes a miss.

- (1) Jerking the trigger is really a myth and catch phrase used to describe an improper trigger manipulation.

- (2) Typically, what is actually happening is that the shooter is not isolating the trigger finger when pressing the trigger and is instead squeezing with the whole hand. This is normally a very small, subconscious movement and is difficult for the shooter to perceive – which makes it difficult to correct.
 - (3) This squeezing with the whole hand or “milking the grip” is what can cause the sights to move off of the target, resulting in a miss.
- c) Deliberate Trigger Press during Practical Shooting

Many shooters are able to utilize a deliberate trigger press and isolate the trigger finger during precision, “flat range” training. Many of those same shooters have not developed a deliberate trigger press during practical shooting – such as when reacting to a sudden target presentation. (Conscious Competence vs Subconscious Competence.) Often what happens when a shooter attempts to fire the weapon quickly is that the trigger press is executed as a single act along with presentation of the weapon and alignment of the sights rather than as a separate, deliberate action. This can promote “milking the grip” or firing the weapon prior to the sights being properly aligned. The shooter must conduct deliberate practice to develop a subconscious competence with trigger control. The practice should involve deliberately separating the presentation and alignment of the weapon on target from the trigger press. The shooter should practice doing everything up to the press of the trigger – even taking slack out of the trigger – and verifying sight alignment, and then deliberately and properly pressing the trigger.

5. Breathing

Breathing is important at greater distances and in the prone position – especially when using a shoulder fired weapon. If you are not able to at least control your breathing, it can cause some serious marksmanship errors.¹⁰ Again, breathing while trying to place an accurate shot can cause the gun to move thus moving the sights off target.

Typically, the shooter will briefly hold their breath while firing the weapon. This really only creates an issue if the breath is held for a long period of time – more than a few seconds if the shooter has been

physically active prior to the shot. If the breath is held for too long, the small muscles of the eye will be the first to be effected by lack of oxygen which will make crisp focus difficult, and muscles of the hands and arms can also begin to tremble.

6. Follow Through

Follow through is the process of keeping the weapon on target throughout the entire firing sequence. This means, the shooter must maintain their sight picture as the round is fired and the bullet exits the barrel. During this process, the trigger is released enough to reset and the sight picture remains the same until the shooter has decided not to fire a subsequent round.

- a) Avoid “coming off the gun” to see where the round hit. Stay on the sights for a follow up shot, if needed. The sights can remain aligned on target while the shooter’s visual focus shifts from the sights to the target to assess results of the shots. Stay on the gun!
- b) Release the trigger to the reset. You do not necessarily have to take the trigger finger completely off the trigger. This results in more movement and increases the probability of moving the gun off target.

7. Handgun Specific Fundamentals

a) Grip

Assuming that all other marksmanship fundamentals are being applied, the grip is one of the most challenging aspects of firing a pistol accurately. This is because the grip and trigger control are closely related. The grip must allow for the pistol to be held securely, to enable the shooter to manage recoil, but must also allow for independent function of the trigger finger. Shoulder fired weapons are typically held securely at three or four points of contact – forend, grip, stock weld to shooter’s face, and stock against shooter’s shoulder – which makes the actual grip much less important. A handgun, however, is held at only one point of contact – the grip – and any subconscious movement of the handgun during trigger manipulation will induce a miss. A good grip reduces energy leakage and allows the weapon to cycle in the way in which it was designed.

- (1) A 360-degree wrap with both hands on the grip affords maximum control of the weapon and allows for rapid recovery from each shot.
- (2) “Pin” the fingertips of the support hand to the weapon hand.¹¹ This enables the grip to naturally become more secure as the pistol is presented while at the same time minimizing muscular tension in the grip.
- (3) Have a firm handshake grip with the weapon hand but grip tightly with the support hand.¹²
- (4) Thumbs should be relaxed and may be oriented up or slightly forwards. Forwards means thumbs are pointed at target. The key is to keep the thumbs relaxed as tension in the grip of the thumbs can make it difficult to isolate the function of the trigger finger.
- (5) The wrist of the support hand can be articulated down to the maximum range of motion which will assist in naturally returning the pistol to a position of sight alignment after recoil.

b) One-Handed Shooting¹³

As a tactical officer you may be forced to engage a threat utilizing one handed shooting, specifically with a handgun. When engaging a threat the shooter should do the following:

- (1) Present the weapon quickly with wrist locked. Do not just punch the weapon out as this will cause a bounce in the handgun. Near the end of the presentation, slow the motion down with the elbow slightly bent. This will absorb some of the bounce. When engaging with a single hand, pivot the body at the hips to push the handgun out with authority.
- (2) You can cant the weapon slightly as this is a natural body position.
- (3) Situations that might require one handed shooting include:
 - (a) The deployment of a ballistic shield
 - (b) Transition from a primary weapon to a secondary weapon.

- (c) Opening a door.

I. Shooting Positions

SWAT operators must be capable of shooting effectively in a variety of positions. These positions include variations of standing, kneeling, and prone positions.

1. Standing¹⁴

The standing position will be the most common position that a SWAT officer will be in during CQB and other maneuvers. Many of the cues for an effective standing position are the same as those for an effective basic shooting stance.

- a) Aggressive athletic stance (boxer's stance), similar to the modified isosceles stance or interview stance with hips and shoulders squared up to the target.
- b) Weapon side foot is slightly back with support foot forward. Toes pointing toward threat with weight on the balls of your feet.
- c) Knees are slightly bent with the majority of your weight on the forward (support side) knee.
- d) Handgun:
 - (1) Two handed grip as previously described with support side arm fully extended. Tension in the support side arm and hand to control recoil and less tension in the firing arm and hand so that the trigger finger may be independently operated.
 - (2) Head upright with weapon at eye level.
- e) Shoulder Fired Weapon:
 - (1) Stock pulled tightly into shoulder with firm grip. Both hands should be pulling back on weapon.
 - (2) Support hand extended out as far as comfortably can be pulling gun into shoulder – no “magwell grip”. This gives better control of the weapon during target transitions and recoil. This hand position should also dictate where accessory controls – such as weapon mounted lights and lasers – are mounted on the rifle.

- (3) Elbows down.
- (4) Keep your head upright.
- f) Cover or Supported Position
 - (1) When cornering or shooting from cover, the operator may find better stability by ensuring that the foot closest to the apex of the corner is forward and the toes of that foot are pointed at the apex of the corner.
 - (2) When shooting from cover, the support hand can be placed against the cover for stability and also provide a rest or support for the handgun or the shoulder fired weapon.

2. Kneeling¹⁵

Conventional kneeling works well during quick target engagements at longer ranges as it is a quick way to get a more stable shooting position with a long gun. However, it is just a starting point for tactical shooting to build a somewhat better kneeling position. Generally, the upper body position is similar to the standing position.

- a) Weapon or strong side knee on the ground and support side foot is on the ground with knee bent.
- b) Shoulder Fired Weapon:
 - (1) Support side elbow is supported by support side knee. Try to avoid bone on bone contact.
 - (2) You may bring in your strong side foot and sit on your flattened foot for a more seated position.
- c) Covered/Supported Position
 - (1) When shooting from cover, the operator may find better stability by placing the foot closest to the apex of the corner down with that knee bent. When firing a shoulder fired weapon, that knee is then used to support the elbow that is at the fire control of the weapon.
 - (2) The support hand can be placed against the cover for stability and also provide a rest or support for the handgun or the shoulder fired weapon.

3. Prone¹⁶

Shooting from the prone position is probably the most stable traditional shooting position and can be the most accurate at longer ranges but it also takes the longest to get into and out of. Tactical equipment and armor, especially the helmet, can make it difficult to get a good prone position. .

- a) Body should be positioned directly behind the gun, if possible, which helps to absorb recoil, helps with proper sight or weapon alignment to the target, and a natural point of aim.
- b) Of all of the other shooting positions, breathing will affect accuracy more in the prone position. This is due to the rise and fall of your chest as you inhale and exhale. Try to briefly hold your breath and fire during your natural respiratory pause.
- c) The reason the prone position is one of the most accurate is that the shooter can take advantage of support for the weapon and the body to minimize movement.
- d) Handgun
 - (1) If possible, the shooting hand should be in direct contact with a physical support or should be resting on the support hand which is in direct contact with a physical support.
 - (2) In order to get a sight picture, the head may have to lie sideways on the shooter's shoulder.
- e) Shoulder Fired Weapon
 - (1) The U.S. military used to teach soldiers that it was not good practice to rest the magazine on the ground as it would induce malfunctions. However, in recent years and with improved magazine design, it has become standard practice to rest the magazine on the ground to afford better stability.
 - (2) "Elbow-Magazine-Elbow"¹⁷ Think of the concept of a tripod with this. Your two elbows, along with the magazine on the ground become a makeshift tripod providing improved support and stability.

4. Unconventional Positions

SWAT operators should be efficient at shooting from various unconventional positions that may be particularly useful in an urban

environment when using vehicles and other objects as cover and/or concealment when shooting. When possible, the upper body and weapon relationship should be as close to a normal shooting position as possible in order to preserve natural weapon handling and consistent eye relief.

a) “Urban Prone”.

There are several different positions that require the shooter to lie on their side, almost like in a fetal position, and shoot under a vehicle or other low piece of cover. These positions are typically fairly stable. The process of establishing these unconventional positions is normally what must be practiced more than actually shooting from these positions.

b) Weapon Horizontal.

Firing from an “urban prone” position or maintaining a very low profile when shooting over a piece of cover may require the weapon to be held horizontally. At closer ranges with a handgun or shoulder fired weapon, the shooter will simply aim as they normally would with the weapon held vertically. At longer ranges with a shoulder fired weapon, however, the shooter will have to modify the sight alignment to hit their target. With the weapon horizontal the normal zero setting will tend to cause the point of impact to shift in the direction of the sights or optic and, of course, towards the ground as gravity effects the trajectory. The rule of thumb at longer ranges is to “hold high and towards the magazine”.

J. Ready Positions for Tactical Use of Firearms

During many SWAT operations, the operator will carry a firearm in-hand while approaching, entering, and clearing areas or structures, and will likely have a firearm in-hand when physically securing subjects within those areas or structures. It is critical that SWAT operators learn and practice safe and effective ready positions. A ready position is a deliberate manner of holding a firearm when not aiming in on a target or actively firing the weapon.

1. Attributes of Firearm Ready Positions²³

- a) Must be safe for you and your teammates in congested environments
- b) Allows for avoidance of muzzle sweeping your teammates
- c) Affords good retention

- d) Permits rapid target acquisition
- e) Permits the execution of defensive strikes
- f) Can be maintained for extended periods of time
- g) Fosters rapid and balanced movement

2. Depressed Muzzle

This is the position the weapon is carried in when the operator anticipates imminent contact with an armed and dangerous suspect, or when actively assessing the level of threat posed by a subject that has been encountered during the operation. It is essentially the firing position but the muzzle is depressed so that the operator is looking over the top of the sights/optic rather than through them. If the operator sees a suspect that poses a deadly threat, the operator need only bring the muzzle up slightly to align the sights/optic on target while manipulating the selector lever to fire the weapon.

a) Handgun

The handgun is in the two handed firing grip with the hands in position to operate the weapon light. With the handgun, the weapon may be brought closer to the body by bending the elbows slightly and “compressing” the position slightly.

b) Shoulder Fired

The stock is pulled firmly into the shooter’s body and shooter’s hands are in position at the fire controls and able to operate any additional accessories such as the weapon light.

3. Low Ready. The low ready position is a relaxed ready position that can be maintained for longer periods of time without fatigue. This position would be used when the operator needs the weapon in hand – rather than holstered or slung – but contact with an armed and dangerous suspect is not believed to be imminent.

a) The low ready position basically orients the weapon at a downward angle, directly in front of the officer. The weapon needs to be very low as it should not obscure any part of the field of view of the operator.

- (1) Handgun. The operator maintains a two handed firing grip on the handgun and the elbows are bent so that the upper

arms are resting against the torso.

- (2) Shoulder Fired Weapon. With a shoulder fired weapon, the buttstock is typically near the shoulder but is not mounted in the same way that it is when in the Depressed Muzzle position. In order to properly mount the weapon, the muzzle must be punched out towards the target and then the weapon brought back so that the stock contacts the shooter's body.

- b) This is probably the most favored by many law enforcement agencies as it keeps the muzzle pointed down in a "safe direction". Think of an operator standing on perimeter watching over an area with no threat at the moment. Down may not always be a "safe direction", however – consider maneuvering with another operator that has taken a prone position in front of you at a position of cover or standing behind another operator in a stack.

4. Low Port.

This is a position the weapon should be carried when working and moving in and around tight confines with other officers or the public. Possibly during a building search or while moving in a crowded area. The muzzle is positioned ninety degrees down – directly at the area between the officer's feet. The weapon is returned to a low ready – or any other ready position - once there is no concern of unintentionally muzzle sweeping another person.

- a) Handgun

The operator will not be able to maintain a two handed firing grip in this position. The operator may adopt Position SUL, or Sul Position. Sul means "south" in Portuguese and this technique was developed in Brazil. The handgun is brought all the way to the torso with the muzzle pointing down. As the support hand is forced to break away from the handgun, it can either flatten against the torso or wrap around the slide and trigger guard of the handgun to assist with control and retention.

- b) Shoulder Fired Weapon.

In this case the muzzle direction is carefully controlled using the support hand. Although the strong hand will remain on the pistol grip, it may not be a firing grip.

5. High Ready.

The high ready position is a relaxed ready position that can be maintained for longer periods of time without fatigue. This position would be used when the operator needs the weapon in hand – rather than holstered or slung – but contact with an armed and dangerous suspect is not believed to be imminent, or when retention and control need to be maximized.

a) Handgun

The operator maintains the two handed firing grip. The elbows are bent so that the upper arms are in contact with the torso. The handgun is oriented upwards and the muzzle is just below eye level which aids in being able to quickly index the weapon on target. The handgun is simply punched out towards the target to acquire the sights.

b) Shoulder Fired Weapon

The rifle is oriented upwards with buttstock at or near the belt line and under the armpit. Try to keep the muzzle just below eye level. This aids in being able to quickly index the weapon on target. The rifle must be punched out and then pulled back into the shoulder. This prevents the buttstock from catching on any clothing or gear.

6. High Port

The high port position orients the weapon ninety degrees up for the same reasons as stated previously for the low port position. It is critical that the operator maintain muzzle awareness and direction so as to avoid pointing the weapon at another operator's head.

a) Handgun.

The operator may maintain the two handed firing grip or utilize a one handed grip depending on the circumstances. The handgun should be held high enough that the operator can see the muzzle and maintain good awareness and direction.

b) Shoulder Fired Weapon.

As when using the low port, the muzzle direction is carefully controlled using the support hand. Although the strong hand will remain on the pistol grip, it may not be a firing grip. As an alternative, depending on the circumstances, the weapon may be controlled by the strong hand only, positioned at the fire controls,

and keeping the muzzle straight up.

K. Loading and Unloading

1. The Workspace

When loading and unloading the handgun or the shoulder fired weapon, the operator should bring the weapon into the “workspace” rather than keeping the weapon extended in the firing position. This refers to a position that is essentially in front of the shooter’s upper chest and face. This position enables the shooter to look at the weapon when necessary for efficient manipulation but also to maintain situational awareness through use of peripheral vision and efficient shift of focus from weapon to environment. This position also enables the shooter to manipulate the weapon with more control just as any task would be more efficient without having the arms extended and locked into a particular position. Bringing the shoulder fired weapon into the workspace also involves anchoring the stock of the weapon between the shooting arm and the operator’s torso. This enables the operator to manage the weight of the shoulder fired weapon and enables the operator to conduct reloading procedures and other manipulations while on the move.

2. Loading

Most rifles and semi-automatic handguns are designed to be loaded from the open bolt, or with the bolt/slide locked to the rear. This is where the phrase, “Lock and Load”, comes from – the bolt is *Locked* to the rear and then the weapon is *Loaded*. As with any other skill, it is important to establish a consistent method for loading so that the skill becomes more efficient with practice.

a) Handgun.

- (1) With the firing grip established, place the trigger finger on the index point.
- (2) Lock the slide to the rear.
- (3) Insert a loaded magazine.
- (4) Chamber a round and return to a ready position.

b) Shoulder Fired Weapon.

- (1) Ensure the weapon is on Safe. With the firing grip at the fire controls, place the trigger finger on the index point.
- (2) Anchor the stock. During the loading or unloading process, the rifle will be controlled with one hand while the other hand manipulates a magazine. In order to control the weight of the rifle, it is important to anchor the stock firmly against the operator's body or under the operator's shooting side arm. When the operator is pulling the charging handle to the rear, it is typically more efficient to anchor the stock against the front of the torso.
- (3) Lock the bolt to the rear. Move the support hand to the front of the magazine well. This will enable the support hand to anchor the stock against the body and operate the bolt catch while the charging handle is operated with the strong hand. Once the bolt is locked to the rear, the operator's strong hand returns to the pistol grip/fire control and is used to anchor the stock so the support hand is free to manipulate a magazine.

Right handed shooters will operate the bolt catch with the support hand thumb while left handed shooters will operate the bolt catch with the support hand middle finger.

- (4) Insert a magazine. The operator gets a loaded magazine from a magazine pouch and establishes a full hand grip around the lower end of the magazine (rather than a "pinch grip" around the floor plate of the magazine). The operator fully inserts the magazine into the magazine well of the rifle and then tugs on it to ensure that it is fully seated and retained by the magazine release.
- (5) Chamber a round and return to ready position.

A right handed shooter will use the thumb of the support hand to depress the bolt catch to allow the bolt to move forward and chamber a round. The support hand is then moved to the forend or handguard of the rifle and the rifle is returned to a ready position.

A left handed shooter will move the support hand to the forend or handguard of the rifle which will enable the

operator to use the index/trigger finger of the strong hand to operate the bolt catch. The rifle is then returned to a ready position.

3. Unloading

Unloading in a consistent manner is just as important as loading. The general procedure is to remove the ammunition source from the weapon, remove the live round from the chamber, and then to inspect the weapon to ensure it is unloaded.

a) Handgun

- (1) With the firing grip established, place the trigger finger on the index point.
- (2) Remove the magazine.
- (3) Eject the live round from the chamber and lock the slide to the rear.
- (4) Inspect the handgun to ensure that it is unloaded.

b) Shoulder Fired Weapon

- (1) Ensure the weapon is on Safe. With the firing grip at the fire controls, place the trigger finger on the index point.
- (2) Anchor the stock. As described above.
- (3) Remove the magazine. Once removed from the rifle, the magazine is stored on the operator's body.

Right handed operators will use the support hand to grasp the magazine and use the index/trigger finger of the strong hand to press the magazine release.

Left handed operators will use the support hand to grasp the magazine and use the support hand thumb to press the magazine release.

- (4) Eject the live round from the chamber. The operator will pull the charging handle to the rear while watching for the

round to be ejected from the ejection port. Upon seeing the round ejected, the bolt is locked to the rear. The bolt catch and charging handle is manipulated in the same way as when the rifle is being loaded depending on whether the shooter is right or left handed.

- (5) Inspect the rifle to ensure it is unloaded. The operator visually inspects the chamber of the rifle to ensure there is no ammunition in the rifle. If possible, the operator should also physically inspect the chamber by reaching into the chamber with a finger to ensure there is no ammunition in the rifle.

4. Emergency or Slide Lock Reload

The emergency reload is conducted when the shooter has depleted the ammunition held in the magazine and it is empty. At this time, the bolt or slide locks to the rear, and the empty chamber, loading area, and magazine should be visible through the ejection port. Depending on the tactical circumstances, it may be appropriate to transition to a secondary weapon/handgun to address any imminent deadly threats and then conduct an emergency reload once the imminent threat is no longer present.

a) Handgun

- (1) Place the trigger finger on the index point.
- (2) Remove the empty magazine from the handgun. The magazine is allowed to fall to the ground while the loaded magazine is acquired.
- (3) Insert a loaded magazine.
- (4) Chamber a round and return to a ready position.

b) Shoulder Fired Weapon

- (1) Ensure the weapon is on Safe. With the firing grip at the fire controls, place the trigger finger on the index point.
- (2) Anchor the stock. As described above.

- (3) Remove the empty magazine from the rifle. The magazine is allowed to fall to the ground while the loaded magazine is acquired.

Right handed operators use the trigger finger of the firing hand to press the magazine release and can use the support hand to pull the empty magazine from the rifle if it does not drop free on its own. The support hand then retrieves a loaded magazine.

Left handed operators use the thumb of the support hand to press magazine release and can use the support hand to pull the empty magazine from the rifle if it does not drop free on its own. The support hand then retrieves a loaded magazine.

- (4) Insert a loaded magazine. The operator gets a loaded magazine from a magazine pouch and establishes a full hand grip around the base of the magazine (rather than a “pinch grip” around the floor plate of the magazine). Where the spare magazine is stored and how it is stored will have some effect on how quickly this is done. The operator fully inserts the magazine into the magazine well of the rifle and then tugs on it to ensure that it is fully seated and retained by the magazine release. A right handed shooter can use the support hand to pull the empty magazine from the rifle, while the magazine release is pressed by the strong hand index/trigger finger, if it has not dropped free on its own.

- (5) Chamber a round and return to ready position.

A right handed shooter will use the thumb of the support hand to depress the bolt catch to allow the bolt to move forward and chamber a round. The support hand is then moved to the forend or handguard of the rifle and the rifle is returned to a ready position.

A left handed shooter will move the support hand to the forend or handguard of the rifle which will enable the operator to use the index/trigger finger of the strong hand to operate the bolt catch. The rifle is then returned to a ready position.

5. Tactical Reload

A tactical reload is conducted when there are still rounds in the current magazine but the officer wants to “top off” the firearm to ensure they have enough ammunition to respond to additional threats. This reload should only be done when time and/or opportunity are present; for example in an active shooter situation where the officer has engaged the suspect and the shooting has stopped, however, the officer is not sure if there is another suspect or if the suspect still poses a potential threat. (If time and/or opportunity are present, this technique can also be used during a slide lock reload if the operator desires to maintain possession of the empty magazine. This may be when the operator has cover and distance from any threats.)

a) Handgun

- (1) Place the trigger finger on the index point.
- (2) Retrieve a loaded magazine. The objective during a tactical reload is to minimize the time that the handgun has no magazine inserted. The shooter will retrieve a loaded magazine with the support hand before removing the magazine in the handgun.
- (3) Swap loaded magazine with depleted magazine. The loaded magazine is controlled between the thumb and index finger of the support hand while the depleted magazine is removed and controlled between the index and middle finger of the same hand. Once the loaded magazine is inserted into the magazine well, the base of the thumb is used to seat the magazine.
- (4) Retain the depleted magazine for later use. If possible, store it in a manner that it will not be mistaken for a fully loaded magazine.
- (5) There is no need to chamber a round as the weapon did not run dry or empty. A round is still in the chamber.

b) Shoulder Fired Weapon

- (1) Ensure the weapon is on Safe. With the firing grip at the fire controls, place the trigger finger on the index point.
- (2) Anchor the stock. As described above.
- (3) Retrieve a loaded magazine. The objective during a tactical reload is to minimize the time that the rifle has no magazine inserted. The shooter will retrieve a loaded magazine with the support hand before releasing the magazine in the rifle.
- (4) Swap loaded magazine with depleted magazine. The shooter grabs the magazine currently in the rifle just below the magazine well while clamping the spare magazine against it. The index finger can be used to allow for space between the magazines. In doing this “high grab”, it allows the top of the loaded magazine to extend above the top of the depleted magazine to facilitate seating the loaded magazine in the magazine well.

Right handed shooters will press the magazine release with the index/trigger finger of the strong hand while left handed shooters will press the magazine release with the thumb of the support hand.
- (5) Retain the depleted magazine for later use. If possible, store it in a manner that it will not be mistaken for a fully loaded magazine.
- (6) There is no need to release the bolt catch as the weapon did not run dry or empty. A round is still in the chamber.

L. Malfunctions

A malfunction is simply an interruption in the normal cycle of operation of the rifle. Malfunctions can occur for a variety of reasons. They can be operator induced, but more common issues are magazine related and poor maintenance. Weather, environment, and ammunition can cause malfunctions as well. It is imperative that the officer knows how to clear a malfunction and get the rifle operating properly as quickly as possible. Malfunctions can be grouped into three categories – simple, complex, and catastrophic.

1. Simple Malfunctions

A simple malfunction is one that can be quickly and easily addressed using the Tap-Rack-Ready remedial action procedure. This procedure is discussed in the next section. Some typical examples are:

- (1) Improperly seated magazine (Operator error) causes a failure to feed. This often results in the magazine dropping free of the rifle when it is fired/attempted to be fired.
- (2) Damaged or worn magazine causes failure to feed.
- (3) Bad or faulty ammunition causes a failure to fire.
- (4) Bolt not fully seated (Poor maintenance, Operator error - riding the charging handle or even failure to release the bolt when loading) causes a failure to chamber or fire.
- (5) Spent case in chamber (Poor maintenance, Worn or damaged part, Physical contact with reciprocating assembly of the weapon) causes failure to extract.
- (6) A stove pipe is when a spent cartridge fails to fully eject from the ejection port and is protruding partially out, like an old stove pipe. Part of the spent cartridge is blocking the bolt from moving forward into battery causing a failure to chamber. A simple stovepipe typically requires no remedial action other than to reach up and pull or "swipe" the spent cartridge out of the ejection port. Attempting to operate the bolt under these circumstances can induce a double feed and make matters worse.

2. Immediate Actions/Prevention

- (a) Use quality magazines and inspect regularly. Discard or replace worn or damaged magazines.
- (b) Perform proper maintenance and inspect and lube the rifle periodically. A lot of duty weapons spend more time stored than being shot. Gun oil can evaporate or run off. An AR-15 type rifle will operate dirty but wet, but will not perform reliably dry or unlubricated, even if clean. KEEP IT LUBED!
- (c) Tap-Rack-Ready. This is the immediate action that will correct most simple malfunctions. This is the immediate action that

should be performed if there is no obvious complex or catastrophic malfunction.

- (1) The weapon has failed to fire and the operator is no longer aimed in on a threat with the intent to shoot so the operator should attempt to put the weapon on safe, if so equipped. If the hammer is forward, the selector will not move. The trigger finger should be moved off of the trigger and onto the index point.
- (2) Tap refers to tapping the bottom of the magazine to ensure it is properly seated. The operator should actually push the magazine firmly into the magazine well and then tug on it to ensure that it is seated and retained by the magazine release.
- (3) Rack refers to racking or pulling on the charging handle or slide and releasing it to fully cycle the action. This will normally clear the chamber of any spent case and chamber a fresh round of ammunition.
- (4) Ready means that the weapon is now ready to fire, if necessary. If firing the weapon is not immediately necessary, the operator should ensure the weapon is on safe, if so equipped.

3. Complex Malfunction

A complex malfunction is one that cannot be remedied with Immediate Action (the Tap, Rack, Ready procedure) and requires Remedial Action (unloading/clearing the rifle and reloading/resuming). These can include:

- a) Traditional double feed.

A double feed is when the bolt is attempting to chamber more than one round of ammunition. This typically occurs when the magazine is worn and has allowed two rounds to be fed into the chamber area. Even when the bolt is pulled to the rear, the two rounds can be stuck in the barrel extension area.

The weapon has failed to fire and the operator is no longer aimed in on a threat with the intent to shoot so the operator should attempt to put the weapon on safe, if so equipped. If the hammer is

forward, the selector will not move. The trigger finger should be removed from the trigger and placed on the index point.

- (1) Remove the magazine.
- (2) Lock the bolt or slide to the rear.
- (3) Insert 2-3 fingers from the support hand into the magazine well (rifle) or ejection port (pistol) to dislodge any stuck cartridges, if necessary.
- (4) Inspect the feedway of the weapon. If necessary, rack the charging handle or slide several times and look, listen and feel for other obstructions or normal operation. This ensures that no other round is still lodged in the action area.
- (5) Load the weapon and ensure it is on safe, if so equipped.

b) Bolt Override Double Feed (Rifle Only)

A bolt override is very rare but it has occurred. It is the type of malfunction that the officer must recognize and remain calm to fix. The officer must think through the process. A round, fired or unfired, has managed to enter the charging handle channel over or on top of the bolt. It prevents the bolt from going into battery and it makes it appear that the charging handle won't pull fully rearward.

Again, the most noticeable issue is that the charging handle doesn't seem to pull fully rearward. However, due to the round being caught in the charging handle channel and on top of the bolt, the round actually pulls against the gas key of the bolt carrier, thus pulling the bolt carrier group fully rearward. It is, for lack of a better term, an optical illusion. The key is to observe and recognize this and think through the process.

The rifle has failed to fire and the operator is no longer aimed in on a threat with the intent to shoot so the operator should attempt to put the rifle on safe. If the hammer is forward, the selector will not move. The trigger finger should be removed from the trigger and placed on the index point.

- (1) Remove the magazine.

- (2) Pull the charging handle as far back as it will go. You will notice that the bolt carrier group is fully rearward. Lock the bolt carrier back. Leave the charging handle rearward.
- (3) With the rifle in a downward angle, use the knife edge of the support hand to “chop” the charging handle forward. This allows the charging handle to separate from the bolt carrier group, thus creating room for the stuck cartridge to fall free. The downward angle uses gravity to your advantage to allow the cartridge to fall free.
- (4) Now, with the rifle in an upward angle, (Gravity), rack the charging handle repeatedly as stated previously to clear or check for any other obstructions and to ensure proper function.
- (5) Load the rifle and ensure it is on Safe.

c) Stuck Case

A stuck case can happen as a result of an extremely fouled or dirty chamber. It can also be from the result of bad ammunition that is dented or damaged. Typically, the stuck case is lodged in the chamber and has failed to extract and the officer is unable to pull the charging handle or slide rearward with enough force to extract it.

The weapon has failed to fire and the operator is no longer aimed in on a threat with the intent to shoot so the operator should attempt to put the rifle on safe, if so equipped. If the hammer is forward, the selector will not move. The trigger finger should be removed from the trigger and placed on the index point.

- (1) Handgun
 - (a) Remove the magazine.
 - (b) Point muzzle in a safe direction away from you.
 - (c) Firmly grasp the slide with the non-firing hand.

- (d) Release the grip of the handgun with the firing hand and then firmly strike the grip with the firing hand while re-gripping it. This impact is intended to overcome friction of stuck case and eject it.
 - (e) Repeat as necessary until the stuck case is ejected. The operator may perform this technique several times while increasing the effort each time.
 - (f) Once the slide is pulled to the rear, the operator inspects the chamber.
 - (g) Once the handgun is clear, the operator loads the handgun.
- (2) Rifle
- (a) If using a collapsible stock, collapse the stock fully. This prevents the index pin from shearing, thus resulting in pinching the officer's hand or damaging the rifle.
 - (b) Remove the magazine.
 - (c) Grasp the charging handle.
 - (d) Point muzzle in a safe direction away from you.
 - (e) Strike the butt of the rifle on the ground while simultaneously pulling on the charging handle. This creates momentum and aids the officer in pulling the charging handle with more force, when the buttstock impacts the ground.
 - (f) Repeat as necessary until stuck case is removed. Rotate rifle down and inspect chamber if possible. This also allows the stuck case to fall free.
 - (g) Load rifle and ensure it is on Safe.

4. Catastrophic Malfunction

A catastrophic malfunction means that a remedy will require tools and/or replacement parts. The problem will not be remediated in any semblance of a timely manner. It will render the weapon completely ineffective. Should a catastrophic malfunction occur during an operation, the only options are to transition to a secondary weapon or to employ a weapon assigned to and carried by another officer. Although unlikely, this is a reason for uniformity in set up and zero of all team weapons.

- a) Case head separation is where the cartridge case has separated into at least two pieces and one of the pieces is still lodged in the chamber. A special tool is required for removal.
- b) Any broken or worn part.

M. Transition to Handgun

Transitioning is the process of switching to your secondary weapon (typically a handgun) from your primary weapon (typically a rifle). As with reloads, there is either an emergency transition or a tactical transition. An emergency transition should be done when the primary weapon stops firing – either due to a malfunction or running out of ammunition – and the officer needs immediate use of a functioning firearm. This would be when the deadly threat is imminent and close and the officer cannot safely move to cover. A tactical transition would be conducted when there is no imminent threat and the officer determines that the handgun would be a more appropriate firearm for the task at hand – such as searching a confined space, opening a door, or climbing a ladder where using the rifle would make maneuverability difficult.

1. Emergency Transition.

- a) The weapon hand immediately begins to move to and grip the handgun. The rifle has failed to fire therefore it is not necessary to place the rifle on Safe.
- b) The support hand controls the direction and fall of the rifle. Do not just let the rifle go. This can throw the officer off balance or can cause an injury where the rifle hits the body. Typically the rifle is brought down on the support side. Do not forcefully “throw” or “spin” the rifle behind you.
- c) The support hand releases the rifle and comes together with the weapon hand and presents the handgun. This is no different than the typical draw and two handed presentation.

- d) Once it is tactically appropriate, the officer should evaluate the problem with the rifle and either reload it or clear the malfunction that caused it to stop functioning.
- e) Primary and Secondary Handgun. An operator that is armed with a primary and secondary handgun may transition to the secondary handgun or reload the primary handgun, depending on which is more efficient. If the reason for the failure of the primary handgun is unknown, it may be more efficient to transition. The technique for transitioning will depend on how and where the secondary handgun is carried.

2. Tactical Transition

- a) As with a tactical reload, the objective with a tactical transition is to minimize the time that the officer does not have a functioning firearm in their hand. While maintaining control of the rifle with the support hand, the officer simply draws their handgun and brings it to a ready position.
- b) The officer then lowers the rifle so that it is controlled by the sling and establishes a two handed grip on the handgun.
- c) If an officer can transition behind cover or with the benefit of a cover officer, then more time can be taken to properly secure the rifle in an optimum sling carry position prior to drawing the handgun.

N. Shooting on the Move²⁴

The need for learning to shoot while continuing to move is paramount in ensuring that an operator does not impede the progress of the team or create a situation where the team becomes “bottlenecked.”

While moving, the trigger finger **should not** be on the trigger. The trigger finger should be placed along the frame of the weapon at the index point to avoid an “Involuntary Contraction.”²⁵

NOTE: STANCE is a fundamental for building upon. However, operators should not become accustomed to shooting from a stationary platform as they will likely be in motion at the time of a confrontation.

1. Pivots and Turns

A pivot or turn is conducted when a stationary officer needs to face a different direction to address a potential threat. This movement would replicate an officer standing on a perimeter or covering/observing an area. If the officer sees or hears something in a certain direction, then the officer will turn and address the issue appropriately. The officer will start from a ready position in a good shooting stance as described earlier. The objective of the pivot technique is to allow the rifle to be efficiently brought on target without unintentionally muzzle sweeping another officer or member of the public. The technique also provides the foundation for turning while moving including making a button hook entry during CQB.

No matter what direction the officer turns, the first thing to move should be the officer's head. He is searching for what he saw or heard. The gun follows, bringing the gun to the eyes. You always lead with the eyes.

a) 90 Degree Turns

- (1) As for 90 degree turns left or right, the officer should always pivot on the foot closest to the direction in which the officer intends to face (the "front" foot).
- (2) Step forward with the foot furthest from the direction in which the officer intends to face (the "back" foot). Avoid stepping backwards.
- (3) Avoid making it a two-step process. Step aggressively forward with the back foot and establish a ready position facing the new direction.

b) 180 Degree Turns

- (1) For a complete 180 degree turn to look behind them, the officer should typically turn in the direction their head turns.²⁶
- (2) Always step forward, never backwards to turn.
- (3) Do not muzzle sweep anybody as you turn. This will require you to utilize either the high port or low port as you turn.

- c) No matter what turn is utilized, the officer should always begin and end in a good shooting/ready position or stance and lead with the eyes.

- d) Do not automatically bring your rifle up or down, depending on your ready position, until you are clear of any fellow officer or teammate or other person that is not your intended target. **DO NOT SWEEP FRIENDLIES!**

2. Forward Movement

There is no doubt that a shooter will be most accurate when a proper, stationary shooting position has been established. It may be necessary, however, for an officer to shoot while moving. It is critical that an officer balance the need to move with the capability of ensuring an accurate shot. The officer should not fire the weapon unless reasonably certain to hit the target.

Being able to shoot while moving affords several benefits. The most important of which is that a moving target is harder to hit. It also allows the officer to move out of the way of his teammates or other officers.²⁷ Lastly, it allows the officer to move to cover while engaging threats.

- a) Walking normally will tend to induce up and down movement as well as side to side movement to the weapon. The officer needs to reduce the movement of the sights to the point that the sights remain within the boundaries of the acceptable target.
- b) Have a slight bend at the knees. This allows the knees to act as shock absorbers. This will reduce the up and down movement. Stiff legs allow the rifle to bounce or jar affecting movement of the sights.
- c) Have a slight bend at the waist. Too much bend will create fatigue of the lower back. This will aid in isolating the upper body from the movement of the lower body.
- d) Walk heel to toe on the feet. It will seem like you are rolling the feet. Take small, quick steps. This will reduce the up and down movement of the weapon. A long stride causes the foot to impact harder, thus creating movement of the gun.
- e) Keep the feet together – as if walking on a balance beam. This narrow stride will reduce the side to side movement of the weapon.
- f) Keep toes pointed in the direction you are going. This will aid in maintaining a narrow stride.

- g) When training, only move as fast as you can accurately engage your target. With practice, you will be able to accurately shoot while moving faster. This will vary from officer to officer based on experience and ability. Ultimately, if a critical shot must be taken to save a life operationally, the operator must know their capability and slow or even stop to take the shot.
- h) When training, continue to move. Do not stop, do not “drag” or slide your back foot. Do not pause to take the shot. If you are moving too fast, then slow down until you can accurately fire at a given speed prior to speeding up again to improve your skills. Again, operationally, you may have to slow or stop to ensure accuracy.
- i) Fire only when your sights are on target. Practice applying the marksmanship fundamentals of sight alignment and trigger control while on the move. Do not wait on a perfect sight picture but ensure that you have an acceptable sight picture. You must accept some wobble and drift as long as the sight is within the center of mass of the acceptable target.²⁸

3. Rearward Movement

Rearward movement could be used to create distance from a threat while still being able to engage, such as when tactically retreating along a hallway back to a secured room during CQB. It can also be utilized to seek cover if the closet cover is behind the officer.

- a) Similar to the forward movement with the main difference being how the feet impact the ground. They should now be in a toe to heel fashion.
- b) During individual movement, if the officer is under intense fire and there is no cover close by, the officer should turn and run as quickly as possible to cover. Do not waste time trying to return fire. Remember, a moving target is hard to hit. A faster moving target is harder to hit – get off the “X”!

4. Lateral Movement

Lateral movements are exactly as the term implies. An officer is moving and has to engage a threat that is lateral or perpendicular to their direction of travel (off to their side). Think of an officer crossing a wide open hallway and a threat appears to their left or right.

- a) Continue to walk in the same manner as if moving forward to shoot.
- b) Twist or pivot your upper body at the waist.²⁹
- c) Feet and hips are still pointed in the direction you are moving.
- d) A side step method can also be used. This is beneficial when moving in and around rooms with obstacles, but allows you to remain focused on your threat without having to look down to see where you are going.
 - (1) Side step while facing your target.
 - (2) Feet and hips are pointed in the direction of your target.
 - (3) Knees are still slightly bent with a slight bend at the waist to absorb impact and movement.
- e) Avoid crossing your feet. This can result in tripping and falling.

O. Pre-Operational Weapons Checklist .

The Pre-Operational Weapons Checklist, or “MAKING READY,” refers to the process during which a SWAT officer prepares to be operational. The process is both mental and physical. Performing this process in a consistent sequence will ensure that all critical steps are efficiently conducted. The Pre-Operational Weapons Checklist allows for economy of motion and a logical progression of tasks. Although the primary focus of this procedure is to ensure readiness of lethal weapons, the checklist can be extended to include communications equipment and any other critical personal equipment.

1. “Switch On,” situational awareness. Regardless of any other responsibilities – operational or in private life – the operator must take a moment to focus on the task at hand and the procedure. This will ensure that the procedure is conducted properly and that the operator is mentally engaged in the process.
2. Protect your eyes. The operator ensures that their eye protection is not damaged, is clean, and is properly worn.
3. Protect your ears. The operator ensures that their ear protection is properly worn and, if necessary, is properly working. This may require a

check of battery strength and may require a communications check if the ear protection is integrated into communications equipment.

4. Load your pistol/secondary weapon. This includes actually loading the pistol and/or confirming the status of the pistol by confirming there is a round in the chamber (press check or chamber indicator check) and magazine check. This also includes ensuring that any accessories – such as lights or optics – on the pistol are activated and are working properly. Finally, this includes a check of all carried ammunition for the pistol – the operator ensures that magazines are loaded as expected and are properly secured in the correct magazine pouches.
5. Load your long weapon/primary weapon. This includes actually loading the primary and/or confirming the status of the primary by confirming there is a round in the chamber (press check or chamber indicator check) and magazine check. This also includes ensuring that any accessories – such as lights or optics – on the primary are activated and are working properly. Finally, this includes a check of all carried ammunition for the primary – the operator ensures that magazines are loaded as expected and are properly secured in the correct magazine pouches.
6. Mentally affirm that all weapons are in operational condition and all personal operational equipment is ready prior to turning to other operational concerns.

P. Pre-Engagement Sequencing

Every human being must mentally process their environment during everyday life. This process is conducted thousands of times a day and normally does not have a critical impact on survival. During life threatening encounters, however, the accuracy and efficiency in the way that a SWAT operator processes the environment can have life or death consequences for the people involved and can also lead to life changing effects such as civil or criminal liability. For a SWAT operator this is a “mental process to discover, analyze, and neutralize threats.”³⁰

During an actual confrontation the SWAT operator must do the following:

1. See the Subject. (Observe) At this point in the sequence, the subject is seen but is just a part of the environment – the brain has not yet assessed the subject in any way. This phase of the sequence only includes the actual physical process of light waves bouncing off of the subject, entering the operator’s eyes, being translated into a nerve signal by the eyes themselves, and that nerve signal moving along the optic nerve to the vision center of the brain.

This phase can be optimized through equipment selection, training, and experience. Proper equipment, such as proper eye protection and weapon

lights, will ensure that operators can receive all relevant visual data from their environment. Proper training that involves realistic targets or live role players in anticipated operational conditions can train the brain to scan the environment in the most efficient manner. This training is reinforced through real world experience in similar environments.

2. Determine Level of Threat. (Orient) The brain differentiates the subject from the rest of the environment, recognizes the potential for the subject to be the source of a threat to the operator, and then conducts an assessment of the subject to determine the level of threat that they pose. This includes factors such as distance to the subject, level of exposure, presence of weapons possessed by the subject, readiness of the operator to employ a weapon, and many other factors that the brain must assess in fractions of a second.

This phase can be optimized through training and experience. Proper training that involves realistic targets or live role players can train the brain to assess the potential threats in the most efficient manner. This training is reinforced through real world experience in similar environments.

3. Determine Appropriate Response. “Shoot/Don’t Shoot.” (Decide) Based on the assessment of the subject up to this point, the brain must select an appropriate response. The appropriate response will depend on the brain’s assessment of whether or not the response will be effective in protecting the operator and/or whether the operator is capable of executing the response under the current circumstances – including available time and distance.

This phase can be optimized through training and experience. Proper training that involves realistic targets or live role players can train the brain to rapidly select the proper response to a particular threat. Training should focus on the smallest effective number of protective options such as: Shoot, Disregard, Physically Control, or Verbally Challenge. Limiting the number of options during training will increase the efficiency of decision. This training is reinforced through real world experience in similar environments.

4. Engage. (Act) The brain has selected the appropriate response to the subject and now must execute that response. This involves the brain sending motor nerve signals throughout the body to the involved muscles and causing the response to be performed.

This phase can be optimized through training and experience. Skills training related to the most common appropriate responses will develop the accuracy and efficiency with which the operator executes the actions.

This training should involve physical control skills, live fire on the flat range and in a shoot house, as well as simulated ammunition and live role players in simulated operational conditions including team maneuver.

Q. Reactive Shooting^{31, 32}

Reactive shooting closely replicates a shoot decision based on a suspect's immediate and hostile act. Reactive shooting differs from precision target shooting in that the threat controls the time and not the shooter. In a tactical situation the officer will always be faced with a "Reactive Response." **Action is always faster than reaction**, yet a tactical operator must see or perceive a threat prior to acting on this threat. If you look at the differences between reactive shooting and precision target shooting, note the following:

Reactive Shooting	Precision Target Shooting
Threat controls the time	Shooter controls the time
Subconscious thought process	Conscious thought process
Distances less than 15 yards	May be distances greater than 15 yards
Timed in hundredths of a second	Timed in seconds

1. Impacts on Reaction Time and Sight Picture

- a) In a reactive situation it will take the brain at least 1/4 of a second to realize that an imminent threat exists.
- b) It takes at least another 1/4 of a second to act.
- c) From the time an officer perceives a threat until the time the first shot is fired, at least one-half of a second has elapsed, or in simple terms, the threat has at least one half of a second head start on the officer.
- d) Be prepared to react quickly. Be aware that the brain will focus more on the threat (Threat Focus) rather than the sights of the weapon in the manner that precision shooting has been taught. However, it is vital to see some type of sight picture. Deliberate, ongoing training is essential in this area.

- e) Trust your ability to threat focus on a target. You are basically bringing the sights on target and simply super imposing them over the threat.
 - f) Sights will be referenced by a “flash sight picture” as the weapon is quickly brought to eye level. The front sight will suddenly be located between the eyes and the target.
 - (1) Muscle memory movement is the art of conditioning the body via repetitive motion to respond in the same manner each time – subconscious competence. Muscle memory involves moving a task to the subconscious mind via repetitive action, a necessary skill for a tactical team member.
 - (2) Speed and precision are in inverse proportion to each other. Close shots with larger center of mass require more speed and less precision. Further shots with smaller center of mass require more precision and less speed.
 - (3) Training will demonstrate what level of sight picture is necessary to promote accurate shots on varying sizes and distances of targets. A distant target may require full sight alignment and front sight focus. A very close target may only require that the shooter can see the rear of the firearm and can see that the firearm is aligned on the center of mass of the target.
2. Handgun vs Shoulder Fired Weapon. Reactive shooting is another area that the shoulder fired weapon is superior. The longer sight radius of a shoulder fired weapon makes even a minimal sight picture more accurate. The fact that the shoulder fired weapon is held more securely at multiple points of contact means that accuracy is much less effected by trigger control. Trigger control is a major issue during reactive shooting when the operator is suffering from the effects of survival stress.
3. Training. Although reactive shooting will differ from precision target shooting, dedicating time and effort to deliberate, precise shooting during training will develop the motor skills necessary to prevail during a reactive shooting incident.

R. Post Engagement Sequencing⁴⁵

The most important thing that can be said about post engagement sequencing is, “It ain’t over ‘til it’s over.” Reestablishing situational awareness following an exchange of gunfire with a hostile individual may prove difficult. Operators can

condition themselves by following this sequence of events during reality based training:

1. Assess the Threat (through the sights or optic). (Observe and Orient) The initial focus is the subject that the operator shot at. That subject posed an imminent deadly threat fractions of a second ago and may still pose a threat. Prior to shifting attention away from that subject, the operator should ensure that subject no longer poses and imminent threat.
 - a) Did I hit my target? It is possible that merely shooting at a subject will cause that subject to fall or flinch in a way that makes it appear that they were struck by gunfire.
 - b) Did it work? Has the subject's behavior been changed to the point that the subject no longer poses an imminent threat? The subject may have been physiologically or psychologically incapacitated or may have been struck but not incapacitated.
 - c) Do I need to do it again? The subject may also continue to pose an imminent threat from their new position after being shot at. The operator may need to shoot the subject again to stop the imminent threat.
2. Depress Muzzle and Re-assess. (Decide, Act, Observe, Orient) This is an extension of the assessment of the subject that the operator shot at. The initial assessment was conducted through the sights or optic in order to reduce the operator's reaction time should another shot be required. The operator now lowers the weapon to the Depressed Muzzle position and conducts a broader assessment of the subject. Now the subject's whole body and immediate area are assessed rather than just the subject's hands and behavior. This is the first step in the process that begins to expand the operator's situational awareness and open up the tunnel vision they are likely experiencing.
3. Assess Environment. (Decide, Act, Observe, Orient) During this phase of the Post Engagement Sequence, the operator is fully recovering situational awareness and opening up the field of view to "break tunnel vision".
 - a) Look (left, right and to the rear). The operator must look around the environment and must **see** what is in the area. The operator is looking for additional subjects that pose a threat or any aspect of their environment that poses a threat to them or others, such as an explosive device or dangerous chemicals.

- b) Check Corner/AOR for second threat. During CQB maneuvers, the operator must complete the assessment of their hard corner, if necessary.
 - c) Check to make sure your teammate is okay and has not been injured during an exchange of gunfire. If no additional threats are observed, the operator checks on the status of their team mates and others in the area.
 - d) Check to make sure no one is attempting to attack your rear or flank. Continue to maintain broad situational awareness to ensure that any additional angles of exposure are covered.
4. Communicate and Maneuver. (Decide, Act) In the absence of other threats, the operator may initially return focus to the subject that was shot, cover that individual, and communicate to other operators what the result of the shooting was. ("Suspect down, I'm OK, Covering. Need One.") This is also when the operator should conduct a self-assessment if they had been shot at or otherwise physically assaulted - the operator should check themselves for injuries.

Note: Just as with the Pre-Engagement Sequence, this Post Engagement Sequence can be made more accurate and efficient through deliberate, focused training and real world experience. Training should replicate real world conditions as much as possible.

S. Cover/Covering Procedure⁴⁶

During SWAT operations, there are several conditions that will require an operator to shift focus from the operational environment to a particular task. This shift of focus will prevent the operator from maneuvering, supporting team tasks, scanning an area of responsibility for threats, or firing a weapon when necessary. These conditions may include, but are not limited to, a need to clear a malfunction of a firearm, to reload a firearm, to perform trauma care on themselves or on another person. (These conditions are not present when an operator can simply transition to a secondary firearm and continue the mission, but may be present when that operator has an opportunity to get the primary firearm back into an operational condition.)

During these conditions, it is necessary for a different operator on the team to take responsibility for scanning and covering the area of responsibility for the operator engaged in the task. These circumstances can develop during highly stressful operational conditions and therefore the team should develop and practice a procedure for requesting and confirming cover by another operator. The following sequence is an example of such a procedure. Each team may develop

their own procedure and terminology as long as the procedure is simple and efficient and ensures clear communication.

1. The operator who needs cover yells **“Cover!”** This is different from yelling, “Need One,” because it communicates that the need is for cover of a threat area and is potentially more important than simply needing support for some other task. (Alpha)
2. An available operator moves to provide support. If this movement will take more than a few seconds, the operator may communicate, “Moving! Coming to you for Cover.” Once the support operator is in position to provide cover of the threat area, he/she yells, **“Covering!”** The position taken by the support operator will depend on the tactical environment but typically will be between the threat area and the operator that has requested cover. (Covering)
3. The operator that requested cover may then shift focus to the task at hand. If it is not immediately obvious, then the task operator may communicate to the cover operator what is being done – reloading, fixing a malfunction, or treating an injury. Once the task is completed and the task operator is able to return focus to the larger operational environment, the communication is, **“Ready!”** (Bravo)
4. The covering operator then yells, **“OK!”** and is free to maneuver as necessary to continue the mission. (OK)

T. Low Light Considerations⁵¹

Shooting in low light conditions will certainly be encountered in law enforcement. The officer must be capable of shooting in low-light conditions as well as in lighted conditions. Target discrimination is of the utmost importance. It is also important that the officer understand how the lighting conditions may place them at a tactical advantage or disadvantage.

1. Read the Light

When entering a low-light environment, assess the varying levels of light. Is it dark, partially lit or something else? This is important when moving from one area to another.

- a) Avoid being backlit by doors or windows or other light source.
 - (1) Front light; dominate with light.
 - (2) Back lighting; dominate with light and/or move to lowest level of light.

- b) Remember, “Dark holes contain threats.” This simply means that any area that is too dark to see into potentially conceals a threat and should be treated as such until proven otherwise. Put a light in dark holes. Dark holes could be caused by an open door to an unlit room during a building search or by the shaded area under a vehicle when conducting an area search.

2. Operate from the lowest level of light.

In a low-light environment, you are most vulnerable when backlit or when moving from a well-lit area into a dark area. Avoid stopping in doorways or allowing a partner or teammate to silhouette you by turning on their light behind you.

3. Light and Move

Continuous use of a light can allow a suspect to track you and your movements. Use the light sparingly and light the area you intend to move to and move there. Think of trying to catch a firefly at night.

4. Dominate with Light

In most cases, constant light should only be used in two situations:

- a) You are backlit and cannot move to a lower lit area. By dominating with light, you are in essence creating a “wall of light” to hide behind.
- b) Your threat has been located and you need to keep them covered. This allows a blinding effect that can disorient.

U. Shooting While Wearing a Gas Mask⁵²

Gas masks come in two basic types: Commercial and military. To be in compliance with OSHA standards, operators should be issued an OSHA-approved APR, fit tested with that mask, and have a mask which is rated for and equipped with filters to protect against any agent whom the agency may deploy.

- 1. Mask should be carried in such a way that the operator can access their own mask rather than depending on someone else to access it for them.
- 2. When possible, the team works in pairs or groups to put the mask on, one operator covers while the other dons the mask, etc. Operators should develop and practice a procedure for donning the mask and related equipment so that it can be done efficiently while in operational conditions

– including in the dark.

3. Different masks have different positions for attaching the filter. This should be considered when selecting a mask for the team. Some filter placements can inhibit mounting and aiming a shoulder fired weapon.
4. Optic sighting systems aid in sighting problems due to the fact that specific cheek weld and head position is less critical. Generally, the larger the window of the optic and the further forward it is mounted on the weapon, the easier it will be to see while wearing the APR.
5. The operator may have to cant the weapon inward to allow viewing of sights/optic.

III. Conclusion

A. Summary

In this block of instruction we have discussed many of the fundamentals related to firearms use for Special Weapons and Tactics. We have discussed the aspects of training in a controlled environment as well as how the information is relevant to a crisis situation. During a series of drills you will now be tasked with demonstrating your ability to demonstrate the skills we have discussed in class.

1. Correctly describe firearms safety issues including the cardinal rules of firearms handling, and safety issues related to both operational handling and training.
2. Accurately describe the role of the handgun during SWAT operations.
3. Accurately describe considerations for the use of a rifle or submachine gun during SWAT operations including understanding zero and trajectory, height over bore and bore clearance, and the 50/200 zero.
4. Correctly describe the considerations for use of a shotgun during SWAT operations including as a lethal defensive weapon, for delivery of impact and chemical munitions, use of slugs, and during ballistic breaching.
5. Accurately identify considerations for the use of weapon mounted lights including their purpose and their selection.
6. Accurately identify considerations for the use slings on shoulder fired weapons including sling design and sling carry positions.

7. Correctly discuss considerations for the use of weapon mounted optics including the purpose of optics, the various designs of optics, and the importance of back up iron sights.
8. Discuss the proper fundamentals of marksmanship and demonstrate their proper application during a series of controlled drills on the firing range including stance, natural point of aim, sight alignment and sight picture, trigger control, breathing, follow through, and handgun specific fundamentals.
9. Properly describe and demonstrate elements of various shooting positions including standing, kneeling, prone, and unconventional shooting positions.
10. Correctly describe and demonstrate firearms ready positions including attributes of ready positions, depressed muzzle, low ready, low port, high ready, and high port.
11. Correctly describe and demonstrate proper firearms handling including the workspace, loading, unloading, empty gun reloads, and tactical reloads.
12. Accurately describe and demonstrate clearances of common malfunctions including simple malfunctions and immediate action, complex malfunctions and remedial action, and catastrophic malfunctions.
13. Properly discuss instances when a transition to a secondary firearm is recommended and, in a range setting, successfully conduct a transition to secondary including an emergency transition and a tactical transition.
14. Accurately describe and demonstrate considerations for shooting on the move including pivots, turns, forward movement, rearward movement and lateral movement.
15. Correctly describe and demonstrate, in the correct sequence, the six steps of the Pre Operational Weapons Checklist.
16. Correctly describe, in the correct sequence, each of the four steps in the Pre-Engagement Sequence, demonstrate the sequence in a training environment, and explain how each step in the sequence can be optimized.
17. Accurately describe reactive shooting and explain the impacts on reaction time and sight picture, considerations for handguns or shoulder fired weapons, and training for reactive shooting

18. Correctly describe, in the correct sequence, each of the four steps in the Post Engagement Sequence, and demonstrate the sequence in a training environment.
 19. Accurately describe the Cover/Covering Procedure and demonstrate the procedure during live fire range exercises.
 20. Correctly describe considerations for operations in low light conditions including reading the light, operating from the lowest level of light, light and move, and dominate with light.
 21. Correctly explain considerations related to, and demonstrate proper technique when, shooting and manipulating a firearm with a gasmask on.
- B. Questions From Class
- C. Closing Statement

Being able to accurately fire your weapon during a critical incident can be paramount to the success of your mission and may also save your life! As a member of your Special Response Team, striking your targets quickly and precisely is expected. Achieving this level of proficiency requires many hours on the range, firing from a variety of positions, advancing and stationary, and with many different target sizes and shapes. It will be up to each individual team member to maintain this expected expertise.

Endnotes

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- ¹ Hom, 48.
² Campbell, 16-20.
³ Haley, August 2017.
⁴ Rogers, 50 – 55.
⁵ Suarez, 53.
⁶ Northern Red, March 2012.
⁷ Lamb, 87.
⁸ Lamb, 89.
⁹ Lamb, 89.
¹⁰ Lamb, 90.
¹¹ Haley, August 2017.
¹² Tigerswan, April 2012.
¹³ Johnson and Feeney, 6.
¹⁴ Lamb, 109-112.
¹⁵ Lamb, 136.
¹⁶ Lamb, 120-123.
¹⁷ Vickers, July 2010.
²³ Pilgrim, 76 – 79.
²⁴ Singleton, 22 -26.
²⁵ Johnson and Feeney, 6.
²⁶ Lamb, 161.
²⁷ Lamb, 169.
²⁸ Lamb, 172.
²⁹ Lamb, 172.
³⁰ Rogers, para 5.
³¹ Rogers, March 1998.
³² Rogers, 76-79.
⁴⁵ Rogers, 54 – 60.
⁴⁶ Costanza, August 2007.
⁵¹ Haley, August 2017.
⁵² Baker, Davis, and Wies, para 2-12.

TITLE:	Tactical Entries, Clearing and Search Techniques
Lesson Purpose:	To introduce to the law enforcement officer fundamentals associated with basic tactical entry, clearing and search techniques.
Training Objectives:	At the end of this block of instruction, the participant will be able to achieve the following objectives in accordance with information received during the instructional period: 1. Correctly describe various tactical principles and explain how they apply to SWAT team building search tactics. 2. Properly define listed terminology that is related to SWAT team building search tactics. 3. Correctly describe and demonstrate proper weapon handling techniques during CQB and describe how the techniques promote both safety and effectiveness during CQB operations. 4. Properly demonstrate verbal and non-verbal communications techniques during CQB operations. 5. Correctly list and describe the six phases of execution of a CQB operation. 6. Properly describe the actions taken during the Contain phase of execution including the containment perimeter and the isolation perimeter. 7. Properly describe considerations during the Approach phase of execution including the use of a deployment vehicle, multiple small vehicles, and while on foot. 8. Properly describe and demonstrate individual actions during the Breach phase of execution including positioning of personnel, methods of entry, and contingency planning. 9. Accurately describe and demonstrate actions during the Enter, Search, Secure, and Clear phase of execution including cornering, room entry, and

hallway movement during both Deliberate Movement and Dynamic Movement.

10. Correctly describe considerations during the Actions on Objective phase of execution including prisoner control, interior security, and exterior security tasks.
11. Correctly describe considerations during the Withdraw phase of execution including preparing to withdraw, maintaining security, and accounting for personnel and equipment.
12. Correctly describe considerations for the use of control and arrest techniques during CQB operations including legal issues, use of force concepts related to CQB, and commonly used physical techniques.
13. Accurately describe how Tactical Emergency Casualty Care should be conducted during CQB operations including during the Care Under Fire, Tactical Field Care, and Tactical Evacuation Care phases of TECC.
14. During a practical exercise, demonstrate the ability to safely enter, search, and clear a structure using tactics, techniques, and procedures discussed during class.

Hours:	Twenty-four (24) Hours
Instructional Method:	Lecture, Discussion, Practical Exercise
Testing Requirement:	Pre-Test and Post Test
Training Environment:	Academic Classroom Training Structure
Materials Required:	Note Pad Pen/Pencil Personal Tactical Equipment and Weapons Eye Protection
Training Aids:	Computer

PowerPoint Presentation
Student Lesson Plan
Instructor Lesson Plan
White Board or Flip Chart with Markers
Targets and Target Stands
Non-Lethal Marking Ammunition
Non-Lethal Firearms or Conversions

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TITLE: Tactical Entries, Clearing and Search Techniques

I. Introduction

A. Opening Statement

As the member of a SWAT unit you will be called upon to enter many different structure types under the worst possible circumstances. It is imperative that you understand your role as well as the roles of your teammates to achieve your objective successfully. In regards to considering what tactics and tools to deploy, each team and individual operator must consider what is reasonable in light of the given circumstances. This training will focus on the most basic principles of entry and clearing. The National Tactical Officers Associations philosophy is that dynamic entry tactics are but one option, but above all else, intelligent mission planning and operational flexibility are the key components to a successful mission entry.¹

B. Training Objectives

1. Correctly describe various tactical principles and explain how they apply to SWAT team building search tactics.
2. Properly define listed terminology that is related to SWAT team building search tactics.
3. Correctly describe and demonstrate proper weapon handling techniques during CQB and describe how the techniques promote both safety and effectiveness during CQB operations.
4. Properly demonstrate verbal and non-verbal communications techniques during CQB operations.
5. Correctly list and describe the six phases of execution of a CQB operation.
6. Properly describe the actions taken during the Contain phase of execution including the containment perimeter and the isolation perimeter.
7. Properly describe considerations during the Approach phase of execution including the use of a deployment vehicle, multiple small vehicles, and while on foot.
8. Properly describe and demonstrate individual actions during the Breach phase of execution including positioning of personnel, methods of entry, and contingency planning.

9. Accurately describe and demonstrate actions during the Enter, Search, Secure, and Clear phase of execution including cornering, room entry, and hallway movement during both Deliberate Movement and Dynamic Movement.
10. Correctly describe considerations during the Actions on Objective phase of execution including prisoner control, interior security, and exterior security tasks.
11. Correctly describe considerations during the Withdraw phase of execution including preparing to withdraw, maintaining security, and accounting for personnel and equipment.
12. Correctly describe considerations for the use of control and arrest techniques during CQB operations including legal issues, use of force concepts related to CQB, and commonly used physical techniques.
13. Accurately describe how Tactical Emergency Casualty Care should be conducted during CQB operations including during the Care Under Fire, Tactical Field Care, and Tactical Evacuation Care phases of TECC.
14. During a practical exercise, demonstrate the ability to safely enter, search, and clear a structure using tactics, techniques, and procedures discussed during class.

C. Reasons

While no tactical concept is perfect, or without some risk, a practiced plan stands a better chance of a safe and successful outcome. A team can significantly reduce the risks posed to innocent victims, hostile individuals, as well as themselves, by applying the basic principles that will be discussed during this block of instruction. It is absolutely essential that you and your team practice these and other tactics far beyond the number of hours of this week of training. After being exposed to these tactics you are responsible for returning to your agency and sharing the information with your team. Your team should evaluate the tactics we will deliver to you during this week of training. As a general rule, if what you have been taught is safer than what your team is currently practicing, the team should elect to incorporate the tactics into regular training dates.

Not all people encountered during CQB operations are suspects. Various terms can be used to refer to people the team comes into context with. In this lesson plan the term “adversary” is used. Again, this is not to indicate that all people encountered by the team will be true adversaries – some of them may be victims that the team is rescuing, others may be members of a suspect’s family that are not involved in criminal activity at all. The term adversary is used to emphasize

that the most important consideration when evaluating CQB tactics, techniques, and procedures, is whether they are effective against a committed and dangerous adversary.

II. Body

A. Tactical Principles

Tactics refers to the “science and art of disposing and maneuvering forces in combat.”² Principles are “comprehensive and fundamental laws, doctrines, or assumptions.”³ Tactical principles have been discussed, defined, and refined for centuries. The following laws or doctrines provide guidance when making decisions related to the science and art of disposing and maneuvering forces in combat, or when facing the possibility of a deadly encounter.

It is impossible to learn a technique or a choreographed method of maneuvering through all variations of structure or other terrain that a SWAT team will encounter. The following tactical principles must be applied and maximized whenever possible. If a certain technique does not take advantage of, or even disregards, these tactical principles, then the technique may not provide the team with the most advantageous way of accomplishing their goal. When possible, all of these tactical principles should be applied to the SWAT team’s practice and manner of operations.

1. **Knowledge of Adversary.** Understanding the adversary is critical. It enables the team to properly prepare through the planning process so that other tactical principles can be maximized. Specifically, this means understanding the number, history, weapons, and capabilities of the adversary.
2. **Knowledge of Terrain.** Where will the encounter likely take place? This information is important to designing the plan and any contingency actions. This knowledge will show available cover and concealment, avenues of approach and escape, obstacles and choke points, barriers that must be breached, and fields of fire and observation for both the team and the adversary. Specifically related to CQB operations, this includes knowledge about the structure itself such as size, composition, layout or floor plan, entry points, levels, number of rooms, and interior door design.
3. **Knowledge of Self.** It is vital that the team is realistic about its own capabilities. This encompasses factors such as level of training, numbers of personnel, armor and weapons, support personnel, and other factors related to the team itself that will impact how well it can function on given terrain and in comparison to a given adversary.

4. Fire/Cover and Maneuver. Whenever an element of the team is moving, another element of the team should provide effective cover when possible. In the context of a law enforcement SWAT operation, this does not refer to active suppressive small arms fire, but it refers to having an element in position that can observe the adversary's position to look out for imminent threats and then can effectively warn the maneuvering element and/or can deliver precise protective small arms fire or less lethal munitions. This can be accomplished through the use of sniper/observers, an established containment perimeter, or by elements of the team itself providing maneuvering overwatch.
5. Mutual Support. Two elements or individuals maneuver in such a way that one provides cover or observation that supports the other. This is accomplished when two SWAT officers move through a door way in a coordinated entry so that one can immediately cover left while the other immediately covers right – they each watch each other's back. This principle is also applied during contact and cover approaches, back-to-back movements, and cross-cover movements.
6. Maximize Use of Cover and Concealment. Team members must sometimes move through open terrain (open field, yard, or hallway) but when possible, available cover and concealment should be used. This principle supports conducting room entries by threshold evaluation rather than by an immediate entry, for example. It is important for SWAT operators to understand what structural components provide cover from small arms fire. Typical interior walls composed of drywall and wood or metal studs do not provide absolute cover from gunfire – although they do provide concealment and make accurate targeting difficult. The structure around doorways and corners does tend to provide more cover than a typical wall section as there are additional reinforcing components inside the wall. Of course, even a drywall and stud wall provides more protection from gunfire than no object at all. If an operator is involved in a gunfight that is initiated during cornering, it is important for the operator to establish firepower superiority immediately, and to be prepared to push or pull back depending on circumstances, but not consider the corner a position of “hard cover” from which to fight.
7. Numeric Superiority. Simply having more personnel than an adversary provides an advantage. In the case that the adversary resists or otherwise attempts to harm members of the team, having more personnel will enable the team to overwhelm the adversary and to suppress the adversary's violence from multiple directions. Perhaps most importantly, simply having numeric superiority is likely to be the main reason that so many SWAT operations are successfully conducted without any injuries at all – the adversary is aware that they are outnumbered and decides not to resist.

8. **Firepower Superiority.** This principle can be applied by actually having more powerful and accurate weapons – such as having a rifle when facing a pistol. This principle can also be applied by having superior skills with the weapons – the SWAT team conducts training so that they are more accurate in delivering fire than the adversary. Firepower superiority can also be accomplished by having the weapons ready to use more quickly than the adversary’s – so the manner in which the team carries their weapons or deploys their weapons can give them firepower superiority over an adversary that takes longer to bring their weapons to bear. For example, making an immediate entry to a room while holding the weapon in a way that makes it difficult to bring to bear violates the firepower superiority principle.
9. **Surprise.** Surprise is achieved by taking action at a time or place or in a manner that the adversary did not expect or for which the adversary did not prepare. Surprise can delay reactions by the adversary, overloads and confuses the adversary’s OODA process, induces psychological shock, and reduces the coherence of any resistance by the adversary.⁴ Maximizing the element of surprise is very important to achieving and maintaining the initiative in an encounter. If an adversary is unprepared, then the team can be much more effective while using much less force. Overall surprise can be achieved through a ruse, low-visibility or covert approach, or by selecting a time and manner of approach that is unlikely to be observed by the adversary. Local surprise can be achieved by the use of noise discipline during maneuver or by approaching from an unexpected direction such as by using a window or wall port. Surprise is a temporary condition and dissipates quickly. How quickly depends on how prepared or motivated the adversary is. Surprise may benefit the team for a few minutes or for only a few seconds.
10. **Pacing/Tempo.** Commonly referred to as “speed” when discussing dynamic entry techniques, pacing is critical to team performance. Pacing will determine how quickly new aspects of the terrain are exposed to the team and will determine how quickly the team is exposed to the adversary. It is important that the team only expose new terrain at a rate that enables them to observe and orient themselves to the terrain and any adversaries present, and enables them to decide on the correct action and to implement that action effectively. This is commonly stated as, “only move as fast as you can shoot,” but actually it should be stated as, “only move as fast as you can evaluate your environment, effectively use appropriate force, and coordinate your movements with your team.” Some missions will require the team to move more quickly than others. In order to develop capability with these mission profiles, the team will have to conduct reality-based scenario training and acquire real-world experience. This will enable the

team to properly and effectively move quickly but not move more quickly than they are able to.

11. **Initiative.** The initiative rests with the one that is taking effective action and is forcing the other to take ineffective action. It is important for the team to maintain the initiative once they have it and to gain the initiative if they have lost it. This may require the team to move aggressively to contact with the adversary or may require the team to break contact with an adversary that has the initiative or has a tactical advantage due to positioning. For example, the team may take the initiative through the application of the element of surprise and may maintain the initiative through the application of proper pacing.
12. **Distraction and Diversion.** The words distraction and diversion have very similar meanings but are used to describe two different things in the context of tactical principles. A diversion is meant to draw the attention of the adversary away from the primary action taken by the team. An example of this might be when the crisis negotiator intentionally speaks to the suspect and even agrees to the suspect's demands and engages the suspect in conversation about how to fulfill the suspect's demands while the team is executing a rescue assault at the same time. A distraction is meant to temporarily startle the adversary or cause them to focus on the distraction itself rather than the primary action taken by the team – it is meant to make it difficult for the adversary to focus. An example of this would be when the team introduces a distraction device into a room and enters the room just after it functions or when a team breaks a window on the side of a structure while entering the front of the structure. Generally speaking, the diversion should not appear to be connected to aggressive police action while the distraction is obviously part of a police action.
13. **Strength of the Defense.** This refers to the fact that an individual or team that is set up in a defensive position will generally have the tactical advantage in that they have the ability to ambush the maneuvering team. The one in the defense can take advantage of terrain, can prepare for an attack or maneuver by an adversary, and can more easily exploit surprise to achieve the initiative. A SWAT team that has established a containment perimeter is essentially in a defensive position and will have some tactical advantage over an adversary that maneuvers towards them or attacks them. A SWAT team that is maneuvering towards an adversary (for example, approaching and entering a structure occupied by an armed and dangerous suspect) will have a tactical disadvantage. On a small level, when a SWAT operator is cornering into an unknown sector, the adversary that is covering that corner has the tactical advantage. Once a SWAT operator has established a point of domination within a room, the

operator has a tactical advantage over an adversary that maneuvers into the sector being covered.

14. **Stealth and Subterfuge.** An advantage over an adversary may be developed by taking effective action that the adversary is not aware of. Clearly, if the adversary is not aware of the action, they will not respond to the action. Action can be taken stealthily or can be taken in such a way that it does not appear to be a tactical action at all. An example of stealthy action is when a team uses night vision optics while moving in the dark so that they do not project a white light signature and compromise their position or movement. An example of subterfuge would be if a team entered an area and occupied a final assault position while dressed in plain clothes and operating vehicles that do not appear to be police vehicles.
15. **Accuracy.** This refers to a lack of wasted effort. Any team has limited resources – time, personnel, etc. – and any waste of those resources will negatively affect their probability of success. Accuracy is important in all phases of an operation – initial assessment, intelligence gathering, operational planning, execution, debriefing, and training design. Accuracy is also important during all phases of execution – contain, approach, breach, enter, search, secure and clear, actions on the objective, consolidate, and reorganize, and withdraw.
16. **Safety.** SWAT teams conduct high risk operations. By definition, SWAT teams do not conduct safe operations. However, it is critical that safety be part of the planning and execution of these operations. This includes wearing safety equipment such as eye and ear protection, wearing protective gloves and footwear, carrying trauma care equipment, and planning for contingencies so that a bad incident can be prevented from becoming catastrophic.

B. Terminology

1. **Operator.** Refers to a member of a SWAT team, an individual that has been selected and trained to be capable of specialized high risk operations and to operate specialized weapons systems, tools, and devices. A highly trained individual that does precision work and consistently puts in the effort to acquire and maintain a high level of competence with knowledge, skills, and abilities related to the work. Originally used to differentiate Special Forces personnel that worked in “operations” from those that worked in logistics, intelligence, or other support roles.
2. **CQB – Close Quarters Battle.** This term has been used throughout history. It has referred to any battle that takes place at close quarters.

CQB now commonly refers to the specific tactics, techniques, and procedures used when entering, searching, securing, and clearing structures.

3. **Clearing Cell.** Two or more SWAT operators that work together to clear an area or accomplish a task.
4. **Immediate Action Team (IAT).** A small group of operators that are set up and waiting to take action in an emergency. For example, when responding to a hostage incident a SWAT team's first priority will be to form an IAT to respond to a sudden emergency.
5. **Initiative based tactics (IBT).** The manner in which a team enters and clears a structure. This refers to the concept that the team leader does not direct each operator how to and when to take each action during CQB. The team develops standardized tactics, techniques, and procedures and conducts training so that each member knows how to apply the tactical principles in accordance with the team's methodology and takes action based on their own initiative.
6. **Sniper Initiated.** An operation in which a sniper takes the first effective action by the SWAT team by delivering an accurately fired projectile. This is usually conducted during a hostage rescue. The shot fired by the sniper triggers or initiates the action by other members of the team to secure the incident location.
7. **Married cell.** A clearing cell that always stays together as one. The concept is designed to ensure that all team members always have at least one other operator with them for support.
8. **Opposite threat principle.** A specific example of the tactical principle of mutual support. The lead operator enters the room and initially clears in the direction of one hard corner or the other. The number two operator "reads the lead" of number one and initially clears in the direction of the opposite hard corner. The operators must coordinate their entry in order to minimize the gap between them when getting through the door opening.
9. **Path of least resistance.** The entry path through a doorway that offers the least resistance or the most efficient path into the room. It is dictated by where the operator is in relation to the door prior to making entry, the way a door opens, and the layout of the room inside the door. Generally speaking, taking a path that crosses the door (from outside left to inside right) will be the path of least resistance and maximum efficiency. When using the opposite threat principle, it is advantageous for the number one operator to give the path of least resistance to the number two operator.

10. **Limited penetration.** This term has two meanings in CQB. It can refer to the shallow entry of a room. The clearing cell enters a room and remains close to the wall that they entered through. Limited penetration can also refer to making a limited penetration entry to a room by only exposing enough of the operator's body into the room to observe and project force but not fully stepping into the room. An example of this type of limited penetration would be when an operator corners into a hallway from a room and covers the hallway by positioning one eye, a lead shoulder and arm, and firearm in the hallway, while leaving the majority of the body covered and concealed inside the room.
11. **Deep penetration or Deep clear.** The clearing cell enters a room and ultimately moves further away from the wall they entered through. This is normally to enable the cell to clear behind objects inside the room that cannot be cleared from the initial entry positions.
12. **Strong wall technique** - A method of room entry characterized by members of the clearing cell taking initial points of domination along the wall they entered through – creating a “strong wall”. This method enables the clearing cell to observe and fire throughout the room in wide sectors of fire without risking shooting one another. The strong wall position need only be maintained long enough to initially assess the room and then members of the clearing cell can coordinate movement within the room to check danger areas and cover follow-on threats.
13. **Hall boss.** This term has two meanings in CQB. The hall boss can be an operator who is moving at the front of a maneuver element in a hallway, often equipped with a ballistic shield, and is directing clearing cells to specific rooms. The hall boss can also be an operator that remains behind clearing cells in a hallway and holds or covers the hall while the clearing cells to the front are inside of the rooms that they are clearing. In this case, the hall boss remains inside a cleared room in order to maximize cover and concealment.
14. **Stacking.**⁵ Stacking is a compact formation that permits two or more operators to efficiently conduct a coordinated maneuver in an organized manner. Stacking ensures that all members of the cell are prepared to execute their role in the maneuver and minimizes any lag time between operators or with equipment manipulation.
15. **Squeezing Up or Tapping Up.** This is a form of non-verbal communication commonly used by members of a team that are stacked up in preparation for initiating a coordinated maneuver. By squeezing or tapping up starting from the rear most operator, all members of the team

know that all members behind them are present and ready to initiate. The point man or lead operator will move when ready rather than when “squeezed” or “tapped”. Squeezing up is typically done by grasping and squeezing the upper arm or triceps area in a deliberate manner. Tapping up is typically done by slapping the shoulder or upper back in a deliberate manner with the palm of the hand. Although there is no rule, squeezing up is typically used during deliberate and stealthy movement and tapping up is typically used during dynamic movement.

16. **Hinge side or Knob side.** Refers to the side of the door where the locking mechanisms are (knob side) or the side where the hinges are visible or the side opposite the locking mechanisms (hinge side).
17. **Push door.** A door that opens away from the operator or away from the team.
18. **Pull door.** A door that opens towards an operator or towards the team.
19. **First light or first view.** This refers to the position that will enable the operator to immediately see beyond a door when it is opened. If an operator stands on the hinge side of a push door, the operator will be able to immediately see into the room as the door opens and has “first light”. If an operator stands on the knob side of a push door, the view into the room will be obscured by the door itself until the door is fully open.
20. **Slicing the pie.** A technique utilized during cornering that maximizes cover and concealment. The operator aligns an eye, a weapon, and, if necessary, a light source on the apex of the corner and incrementally exposes the area beyond the corner. The size of the increments and the rate at which the increments are exposed depends on the rate at which the team needs to move or is capable of moving. The “corner” can be an actual ninety degree corner as would be found in a hallway, it can be one side of a doorway as the operator slices the pie to see into a room, or it can be any object that provides some cover or concealment such as a piece of furniture.
21. **Choke Point.** A terrain feature, obstacle, or structural component that forces members of a team or adversaries to move through a narrow or confining area. This could be a gate in a fence, a doorway, or a hallway. A choke point can be used to the advantage or disadvantage of the team depending on the circumstances.
22. **Bottle Neck.** A choke point that has become clogged with team members as the result of not knowing where to go or as the result of meeting some resistance from the other side of the choke point. The team’s ability to

return fire in this situation is very limited because only one or two operators can safely bring their weapon to bear. Depending on the mission objectives, the team will need to push through the choke point or fall back to cover the choke point, but remaining in a bottle neck will endanger members of the team.

23. **Fatal Funnel.** A choke point that is covered by small arms fire by an adversary - specifically a door leading into a room. In order to enter the room, the team must “funnel” through the choke point. The adversary need only take a position of cover or concealment, aim a firearm at the choke point, and wait until team members are exposed as they enter.
24. **Button Hook** – An entry technique in which the operator steps into the room and quickly turns back into the opposite direction. For example, from outside left to inside left.
25. **Crossing Route** – A room-entry technique in which each operator makes entry by rapidly crossing through the doorway to a position inside away from the fatal funnel, and opposite of where the operator began his entry.⁶ For example, from outside left to inside right.
26. **Yield.** Team members must determine who will enter the room first. One operator must “yield” to the other with some type of verbal or non-verbal communication to indicate who will go first. This ensures a coordinated room entry and enables the clearing cell to use mutual support.
27. **Snapshot** – An operator’s first visual reference of a room he/she is preparing to enter. It is called a snapshot because it indicates that the operator is taking a quick look, sees no immediate threat, and then moves based on that quick look. This can also refer to the image that an operator acquires when conducting a “quick peek.”
28. **Peek-Pause-Push** – Term used to describe the practice of crossing intersecting hallways, specifically a T or 4-Way intersection.
29. **Peek-Pause-Hold** – Term used to describe another technique of crossing intersecting hallways, specifically a T or 4-Way intersection.
30. **Deliberate Clear or Slow and Deliberate Clearing.** An overall scheme of maneuver utilized by the team when time is not a component of mission success. The team moves in a deliberate manner, maximizes all tactical principles, maximizes communication and situational awareness, clears only one new threat area at a time, and conducts all necessary secondary searches along the way. The team may utilize tools and technology to augment this clearing method by sending a robot ahead of their position,

using pole cameras or mirrors to look around corners, or using under door cameras to look into rooms prior to opening doors.

31. **Threshold Evaluation or Diminishing Sectors** – A room entry technique that utilizes the “slice the pie” technique of a doorway before entry is made. It allows for the majority of the room to be cleared or assessed from outside, before entry. The operator crosses over the entry point slowly with weapon up and visually clears the room as he/she crosses. This technique is more common during deliberate clearing.
32. **Immediate Entry.** This refers to the technique of immediately moving through a door and into a room without conducting any threshold evaluation. The clearing cell moves through the door as soon as it is open or as soon as the cell has adequate personnel and is prepared. An immediate entry depends on the adversary being completely ineffective in reacting to the team’s entry and therefore depends on total surprise or overwhelming distraction.
33. **Dynamic Clearing.** An overall scheme of maneuver utilized by the team when time is a component of mission success. The team moves in an aggressive manner, emphasizing a rapid pace, maximizes maintenance of the initiative throughout the area to be cleared, clears multiple new threat areas simultaneously, and typically conducts an initial clear and then goes back through the area to conduct a secondary search to ensure that no hiding suspects have been overlooked. This method of clearing is only possible when the team has sufficient personnel to clear and hold the area during the initial clearing phase or when the team has decided that holding the area is not a priority because mission success depends on rapidly reaching a certain location or rapidly securing a particular known threat.
34. **Stepping Center.** A room entry technique that utilizes the “slice the pie” technique to clear about half of the room beyond the doorway, including the center part of the room, prior to making entry to the room. Once the operator has reached the half way point – or has stepped to the center of the door – a coordinated entry to the room is made. This technique is more common during dynamic clearing or when maneuvering from hallway to room.
35. **Splitting the door.** This refers to having operators positioned on both sides of the door prior to making entry with at least one operator covering the door from each side. This is typically the position that a clearing cell will be in after slicing the pie or conducting a threshold evaluation.
36. **Same side (stack).** This refers to having operators all positioned on one side of the door prior to making entry. This is typically the position that a

clearing cell will be in when first approaching a door in a hallway or may be the position the clearing cell chooses when opening a closed door from within a room.

37. **Dual Flow.** A technique that enables a team to maximize mutual support while maneuvering into two threat areas that are opposing. Typically this is utilized when a team is maneuvering along a hallway and must secure two opposing rooms with open doors. A dual flow requires adequate personnel to maneuver on both threats simultaneously.
38. **Point/Position of domination** – A position obtained in a room where the operator controls a certain area.
39. **Sector/Area of Responsibility (AOR)** – The area an operator is responsible for holding and/or securing.
40. **Immediate threat** – The closest or most dangerous threat or area when entering a room. The immediate threat will be determined by proximity to the clearing cell or by the weapon and perceived intent of the adversary. An armed adversary anywhere within the room is an immediate threat. An unarmed adversary within six feet of an operator is an immediate threat.
41. **TOC** – Tactical Operations Center or command post.
42. **Hold/Holding Position or Static.** Tactically not maneuvering. Can be used to report a status as in, “Blue Team holding,” or “Blue Team static.” Can also be used to direct a team to take an action as in, “Blue Team hold your position,” or “Blue Team go Static.” Affected clearing cells are holding their current position and are covering follow on threats.
43. **Stealth to Breach Point.** This refers to a mission profile that involves the team making a stealthy approach to a breach point in order to maximize the element of surprise. Although most assaults would benefit from a stealthy approach, this concept refers to an operation that requires an uncompromised approach to ensure mission success. The breach point may be on the exterior of a structure or may be an interior breach point.
44. **Stealth to Contact.** This refers to a mission profile that involves the team conducting stealthy maneuver through a structure until contact with the adversary is made. This concept is intended to maintain the element of surprise as long as possible. In order to maximize this capability, the team will need to conduct training on covert entry methods and stealthy movement techniques and breaching.

45. **Breach and Delay.** A technique where the breach is made but entry is delayed and not immediate. Although the intent is to enter through this breach point, the goal of this tactic is to assess and report prior to making entry, communicate or challenge, introduce chemical munitions, or take some other action prior to making entry.
46. **Breach and Hold.** A technique utilized where a breach needs to be established but entry is not made. Although the breach point may be used as part of a contingency plan, the initial intent is not to enter through this breach point. This can be conducted during a barricaded suspect while negotiations are on-going. It can also be used by multiple teams as a distraction while the primary breach and entry is made.
47. **Breach and Pull Back.** A technique utilized where a breach point is created and the team pulls back to a covered position with no intent to utilize the breach point for entry. This is more common during negotiations with a barricaded subject or when developing a situation where the status of the subject is unknown. The goal can be to facilitate communication, introduce a robot, create an opening for observation inside the structure, or to illicit a response from a subject that has not been communicating.
48. **Port and Cover.** This refers to a technique that involves breaching a window or wall sufficiently to provide observation and cover of the space beyond it but not necessarily sufficiently to create an entry point. A team may conduct a port and cover of a portion of the structure that is further away from available entry points in order to more rapidly achieve some measure of control of that part of the structure.
49. **Break and Rake.** This refers to the technique used to breach a window sufficiently to create an entry point. The window glass and structure is broken (break) and then any debris is cleared out of the way (rake) to enable an entry.
50. **Dual/Multiple Breach Points.** This involves multiple teams breaching multiple points on a single structure at the same time. It can be used for making simultaneous entry at multiple locations or to breach and enter at one location and breach and hold at others. Planning and training are necessary to prevent Blue-on-Blue encounters. This tactic may be used during a hostage rescue where the structure needs to be cleared as quickly as possible or anytime a large structure needs to be secured quickly.
51. **Deconfliction Point/Deconfliction Procedures.** Deconfliction is defined as; "To avoid a potential clash or accident involving (non-enemy military operations, weaponry, etc.) in a particular combat area."⁸ This is an

important part of the planning phase if conducting dual/multiple entries. This allows each team to know where they can possibly expect to encounter other teams when clearing a structure and how to safely link up with those teams.

52. **Planned Direction of Clearing.** Usually utilized during dual/multiple entry and clearing of a structure on the same level. Predetermined clockwise or counter-clockwise direction. Enables multiple teams to more effectively clear the structure.
53. **Phase Line.** Terminology used to determine different stages or phases of an operation. Phase lines are more commonly used during the planning and briefing stages of an operation to coordinate efforts of the team and to produce a common operating picture among the members of the team. These phase lines can also be referred to in radio communications for brevity or communications security.
54. **Last Cover/Concealment (LCC).** The LCC is a position that the team can occupy without being concerned about being seen or fired upon from the target location. Once the team has moved beyond the LCC during the approach, there is a possibility of compromise. The LCC is often the closest that a team can be positioned to the target location while waiting to potentially initiate an assault.
55. **Final Assault Position (FAP).** The FAP is the position that the team establishes their assault or approach formation and makes any final preparations. In some cases the FAP will be at the LCC. In other cases – especially in the case of a coordinated rescue assault utilizing multiple breach points – the FAP may be beyond the LCC. When the FAP is beyond the LCC, the plan should minimize the time that the team must stand by at the FAP because the possibility of compromise exists.
56. **Back Clear.** This refers to the team re-clearing, or clearing back through, terrain that has already been cleared once. This would be likely when the team has pushed through an area using dynamic clearing tactics but has not held the area. The back clear will likely be done with deliberate clearing tactics.
57. **Secondary Search.** This refers to the detailed search that a team performs to ensure that any hiding suspects or victims have been located. This would be likely when the team has cleared an area utilizing dynamic clearing tactics and has held the area.

58. **Room Anatomy.**⁹ Having a common terminology for describing structural components of a building will make verbal and non-verbal communications more efficient.
- a) Corner-fed room – door to a room is in the corner of the entry wall.
 - b) Center-fed room – door to a room is in the center of the entry wall.
 - c) Box shaped room – relatively square or rectangular room.
 - d) L- Shaped room – a room with an extension on one end that creates an area not visible from the entry point.
 - e) Linear shaped room – long, narrow room that is similar to a wide hallway.
 - f) Heavy side – the side of the room that appears to have more potential threat areas within it or has a larger area that cannot be assessed from outside the room.
 - g) Weak side – the side of the room that appears to have less potential threat areas within it or has a smaller area that cannot be assessed from outside the room.
 - h) Hard corner – the corner(s) on the entry wall that are immediately to the left and/or right upon entry and cannot be cleared without penetrating the room.
 - i) Easy corner – any corner(s) of the room that are visible from outside the room.
 - j) Long wall – a visibly longer wall within a room.
 - k) Short wall – a visibly shorter wall within a room.
 - l) Short room – a small room that can be cleared by a single operator or may be bottle necked by more than one or two operators, such as a bathroom or walk-in closet.

C. Weapons Handling During CQB

Poor weapons handling can dramatically increase the risk of death or serious injury to members of the SWAT team. It is important that operators learn proper handling techniques and strictly practice them in order to develop proper weapon

handling habits. Proper weapon handling habits will enhance both safety and effectiveness of the team's weapons.

1. Safety

A team member that has unsafe handling habits will unnecessarily endanger other operators and the public. It is critical that proper safety procedures are learned and practiced.

a) Selector

Any weapon that has a safety or a selector lever should be carried with the weapon on "Safe." The operator should practice selecting a "Fire" mode when making the decision to shoot and a "Safe" mode when making the decision not to shoot.

b) Trigger Finger

The trigger finger should always be kept off of the trigger until the operator has made the decision to shoot and the target is safe to effectively engage. The trigger finger should be positioned at an "index point" on the weapon such that even if the operator experiences a sympathetic contraction or a startle flinch response, there is very little possibility that the trigger could be inadvertently manipulated. For handguns, this "index point" is normally up on the slide near the ejection port. For shoulder fired weapons, it will depend on the weapon design but the "index point" will either be well above the trigger on the receiver or well below the trigger on or beneath the bottom of the trigger guard.

c) Muzzle

Muzzle discipline is a critical habit of safe weapons handling and safe team maneuver. Muzzle discipline works two ways – the one controlling the weapon should never point the muzzle at another operator and another operator should never move in front of the muzzle of a weapon controlled by another teammate. The operator controlling the weapon should always move the weapon to the high port or low port carry position when other teammates are moving in front of the weapon. An operator that wishes to move in front of another teammate should not move until that teammate's weapon is at high port or low port.

d) Position While Covering/Firing

When there is no other operator in the direction that the weapon handler is facing, then it is appropriate for the weapon handler to hold the weapon in a high or low ready position or in a depressed muzzle position if covering a potential threat. If there are other operators in the direction that the weapon handler is facing and the weapon handler must cover beyond that operator or fire their weapon, there are rules of safe weapon employment that must be practiced and made habitual.

- (1) Muzzle Beyond Teammate/“Muzzle Before Meat”. When moving in close proximity, a weapon handler that wishes to cover or shoot beyond a teammate must have the muzzle of their weapon well beyond the body of their teammate. When shooting in close proximity to other operators the concerns include not only the actual projectile but also the muzzle blast.
- (2) Safety Margin Distance for Engagement. When not in close proximity or unable to move the muzzle beyond all teammates prior to taking a shot or covering a threat, then the weapon handler must observe safe margins of engagement. An operator can shoot or cover any target or area that does not have a teammate within a 2 yards, or double arm’s length, of their direction of fire or cover. This specifically means that no “friendlies” should be within 2 yards of either side of the line of fire. Although an accurate shot could be fired with less margin than this under ideal conditions, this distance is intended to account for movement of both the target and other operators in the area as well as the potential for shooting under high-stress conditions being less accurate than during optimal conditions.
- (3) Move to Safe Position before Shooting/“Earn the Shot”. An operator that intends to shoot or cover a particular location must adhere to the two rules described above. This may require the operator to move into a position that allows adherence to these rules. The operator must “earn the shot” by moving into position to maximize adherence to these rules when possible and communicate to other teammates so that they can move to maximize safety.

2. Effectiveness

During CQB operations any gunfight or other use of the firearm is likely to occur at close range and with little advance warning. In order for the firearm to be effective, it must be used accurately and used quickly. This requires efficiency. Efficiency does not come from moving quickly, it comes from having to do less.

a) Reaction Time

The SWAT team is at a disadvantage when it comes to reaction time – especially during maneuver such as cornering or room entry. Often, the clearing cell will rely on defensive fire when faced with a deadly threat. Defensive fire requires that the operator observes an adversary, recognizes that the adversary poses an imminent deadly threat, aims and fires at the adversary, hits the adversary, and then incapacitates the adversary. This process takes time. During that time, the adversary has been in a stationary position – essentially waiting in an ambush position – and has likely already initiated the attack. In order to establish firepower superiority, the operator must be more efficient and accurate than the adversary.

b) Mounted/Depressed Muzzle

In order to be efficient, the weapon should be carried in a position that is as close as possible to the shooting position. When an operator is covering an area or cornering into a new area, the weapon should be at the ready – a shoulder fired weapon should be mounted into the shoulder and at depressed muzzle – and oriented towards the area that contains the potential threat. Additionally, the operator should utilize maneuver techniques that enable the weapon to remain in this position, when possible, rather than techniques that require the weapon to be dismounted, compressed, or oriented up, down, or away from the area that contains the potential threat. Generally, a crossing route into a room will enable the weapon to be brought to bear more efficiently than a button hook, for example.

D. Communications During CQB

During CQB operations it is essential that members of the team are able to communicate clearly and efficiently to coordinate maneuvers and reactions to threats. These communications must be effective during high stress maneuvers, including during and immediately after the use of deadly force, and while responding to shots fired at members of the team. Basic communications that are

commonly used during CQB should be practiced regularly so that they become automatic.

1. Verbal

It is important that a team develop and use consistent verbal or audible communications so that all members will more easily understand under stress.

- a) On Me/On You. Used by one operator to indicate that a maneuver will be initiated by their movement or by another operator's movement.
- b) OK. Used to acknowledge communications.
- c) Clear (Right/Left/Front). Used to indicate that the identified sector or area of responsibility does not contain any threats.
- d) Covering (Door/Void/Right). Used to indicate that the identified threat or threat area is being covered.
- e) Contact/Cover. Just as in patrol techniques, one operator is declaring that they will go "hands on" (Contact), and the other is acknowledging and declaring that they will provide lethal cover for the contact (Cover).
- f) Moving. Used to declare that the operator intends to move once acknowledged.
- g) Verbal Direction to Suspect. During CQB, when an operator makes contact with a subject, the operator gives appropriate direction to the subject. Other operators that hear this will know that the operator has made contact. It is redundant and unnecessary to call out, "Contact!" and then begin giving the subject verbal direction.
- h) Plain Language/Common Terminology. Other than the listed simple audible communications, the team should utilize plain language. Where the team finds that different members use different terms for the same thing, a common terminology should be established.

2. Non-Verbal

Non-verbal communication can be used in conjunction with verbal communication or instead of verbal communication. It is critical that the team practice consistent non-verbal communications. It is also critical that the non-verbal communications be effective in low light and other anticipated operational environments.

- a) Muzzle (Indicate/Assert/Yield). In order to maintain efficient control of the weapon, muzzle movements can be used to communicate rather than taking a hand off of the weapon to use a traditional hand signal. Moving the muzzle deliberately up and back down to a depressed muzzle position is used to indicate the same thing as, “On Me”, “Ready”, or “OK”, depending on the circumstances. Moving the muzzle deliberately to the high port or low port is used to indicate the same thing as, “On You,” or “OK,” depending on the circumstances. Once an operator has established a point of domination, moving the weapon into the high ready position indicates, “Clear” in the operator’s sector. Keeping the weapon mounted in the depressed muzzle position indicates, “Covering” the area or point on which the weapon is oriented.
- b) Squeeze Up/Tap Up. Whereas deliberate muzzle movement can be used when operators are within line of sight of one another, some form of physical contact must be used when an operator is not within line of sight. Prior to a maneuver, a squeeze or a tap is used to indicate, “All members behind you understand the maneuver, you have sufficient support for the maneuver, and we are ready and we will move on you.” During a maneuver, a squeeze or tap is used to confirm that the operator in the lead has support and that support is, “With You.”
- c) Weapon Light/IR Laser. In low light conditions, the orientation of the weapon light can be used to show the orientation of the muzzle in order to enable operators to use muzzle movements for communication as listed above. A flashing weapon light can also be used to confirm friendly forces when linking up at a deconfliction point. The same techniques are possible with IR lasers when the team is operating with night observation devices/night vision goggles (NODs/NVGs).
- d) Common Hand Signals. Other than the common listed non-verbal communications techniques, the team should develop common hand signals. Hand signals will require at least one hand to be free and should not be used by an operator that is actively covering a potential threat, if possible. Some common hand signals should be developed for information that is commonly used during CQB.

These should include Push, Hold, Cover, Mirror, Shield, Open Door, Closed Door, Stairs, Breacher, Dual Flow, and Need (1, 2, or a given number of additional operators).

E. Phases of Execution

All building searches and structure assaults will have common phases. This lesson plan will discuss the important concepts, techniques and procedures related to these phases, but will go into detail when discussing the phase during which the team is maneuvering inside the structure. These phases of execution are as follows:

1. Contain. The operational area that the team will be working within should be contained. This should allow for the capture of escaping suspects and should prevent uninvolved persons or additional adversaries from entering the operational area.
2. Approach. This is a tactical maneuver and begins once the team is within line of sight of the target area.
3. Breach. Establishing an entry point to the structure. This includes the actual methods of entry and the various plans associated with breaching.
4. Enter, Search, Secure and Clear. This is the application of tactics, techniques, and procedures related to CQB.
5. Actions on Objective/Consolidate/Reorganize. Pre-planned or contingency actions taken by the team once the CQB phase of operations is concluded.
6. Withdraw. This is a tactical maneuver and involves the team leaving the operational area in a systematic manner that enables them to account for all personnel and equipment and to maintain security during departure.

F. Contain

Any structure that a team is preparing to enter and clear should be at least visually contained and, if possible, physically contained by a perimeter of other officers. Depending on the operation, this containment may be conducted by SWAT officers or uniformed officers in marked cars (overt) or may be conducted by undercover officers and unmarked vehicles that contain necessary personnel (covert).

1. Containment Perimeter. If there are not sufficient SWAT officers to provide containment and entry simultaneously, then the SWAT unit will

conduct the entry while other law enforcement personnel provide containment. It is important for SWAT teams to provide training for officers that may work with the team in a containment role. Whether it is SWAT officers or not, the officers providing containment should be properly trained to address the following factors: confirm visual containment, establish physical containment, use of cover and concealment, establish fields of fire and observation, develop officer down contingencies, develop arrest plan, and develop emergency entry plan. Depending on the circumstances, Sniper/Observers may be deployed as part of the containment perimeter.

2. Isolation Perimeter. Depending on the circumstances, an outer perimeter or isolation perimeter should also be established. The purpose of this isolation perimeter is to increase the safety of the officers on and inside the containment perimeter. It may be necessary to evacuate uninvolved people from the area between the containment perimeter and the isolation perimeter for their own safety. Depending on the circumstances, these people may also be advised of the potential threat and encouraged to appropriately shelter in place.

G. Approach

The approach refers to the phase of the operation that involves SWAT officers maneuvering from the LCC to the skin of the structure to be secured. The approach phase begins at the first opportunity for occupants of the structure to observe or be aware of the SWAT team and ends at the point where the team has reached the skin of the structure. An important element of operational planning is to design the approach so that exposure to observation and gunfire is minimized. The approach may be conducted entirely on foot or may be conducted through a combination of vehicle and on foot.

1. Deployment Vehicle¹⁰

Many teams have at least one deployment vehicle that they can use during the approach. This may be a van or an armored vehicle depending on what is available and the specific circumstances of the mission. The advantage of using an armored vehicle, of course, is that it provides protection from small arms fire. The disadvantage of using an armored vehicle is that it is not discreet at all and there is no hope of using it as part of a low-visibility or covert approach.

- a) The advantage of using a deployment vehicle is that the team can efficiently exit the vehicle and quickly assume their approach formation and positioning. The team should be loaded in the reverse order to the way they wish to exit the vehicle. The

operator who will be first in the approach formation – often the point man - should be the last on board. If deploying from the vehicle in direct line of sight of the target location, the point man will immediately be able to provide some observation and cover while the rest of the team is exiting the vehicle.

- b) A critical consideration for using a larger deployment vehicle such as a van is that it can also be used as an emergency ambulance should an officer be critically wounded during the operation. It is extremely difficult to load an injured SWAT officer into a patrol car or other passenger vehicle. SWAT teams should conduct training for officer down contingencies and include the procedure for emergency evacuation from the scene.
- c) On a case by case basis, the team may consider using a rental vehicle if they do not have access to a deployment vehicle or if they wish to use a deployment vehicle that has a certain appearance. U-Haul trucks, for example, have been used many times to deliver a SWAT team to an operational target.

2. Multiple Smaller Vehicles

Some teams will not have a deployment vehicle available or will decide to use multiple smaller vehicles to support the type of movement and approach for the operation. During the operational planning phase, the team should determine the best positions for officers to sit in the vehicles. Generally speaking, officers that are in the front of the approach formation should be in the first vehicles. If deploying from the vehicles in direct line of sight of the target location, officers that are assigned to carry specialty tools should exit on the “cover” side of the vehicles while officers that can provide cover fire and observation of the target should exit on the “threat” side of the vehicles. Multiple smaller vehicles require multiple drivers, of course.

3. On Foot

At some point the team will make an approach on foot. In some cases, the team may exit a vehicle very close to the target location and then cover a relatively short distance on foot. In other cases, the team may move for a mile or more on foot along a covered and concealed approach route through a wooded area and then make a final approach on foot. The approach will take the team to an entry point.

- a) Fire/Cover and Maneuver.

This tactical principle should be applied during the approach when the team is exposed to the potential of small arms fire. This can be accomplished with the use of pre-positioned Sniper/Observer teams or can be accomplished by utilizing small unit tactics within the approach element. Depending on the distance to be covered by the team, individual members of the team can assume stationary positions that maximize available cover while the rest of the team continues to advance. This responsibility can be switched off multiple times during the approach so that no single members of the team are left too far behind.

b) Approach Formation.

The team should approach in a formation that enables multiple members to effectively observe the target area and to safely and effectively direct fire at imminent threats in the target area. The team should also be dispersed as much as possible so that any weapons fire that is directed at the team is less likely to strike multiple members. Team members that are carrying equipment rather than defensive weapons should be positioned behind members that are carrying defensive weapons.

H. Breach¹¹

During this phase the team creates an opening into the structure that will enable the team to enter. This may be accomplished by placing and firing an explosive breaching charge or by simply opening an unlocked door. There are three primary areas of concern during the actual breach – physical positioning of team members, method of entry, and contingency planning. All of these areas of concern should be addressed during the intelligence gathering and planning phases of the operation, and covered during the briefing.

A failed breach may lead to a failed operation. Assuming that mission objectives cannot be met without making entry, then failing to succeed during the breaching phase means that the mission objectives will not be met and the mission will fail. In the case of a search warrant or arrest warrant service, this will mean transitioning to an alternate plan. In the case of a rescue operation, failing to successfully breach is simply not an option.

This lesson plan will discuss breaching an existing door although many of these concepts will apply to breaching a door, window, or a wall.

1. Positioning of team members.

Team members should be positioned to enable them to efficiently perform tasks related to breaching and to minimize their exposure to threat from within the structure.

a) Executing the Breach.

The operator that is tasked with physically breaching the door typically must approach the knob side of the door. The exceptions to this are when an explosive charge will be placed along the hinge side or when a breaching device will be utilized that enables the team to stand off from the breach point such as a breaching charge on a pole.

The breacher should minimize the time spent standing in front of or close to the door. The best way to minimize this time is to simply execute the task of breaching quickly and then move away from the door.

b) Covering the Breach Point.

Initially, upon arriving at the breach point, members of the team will cover it in the event that an adversary emerges from the door. Optimal positioning for this will depend on the physical structure. Standing on the side of the door opposite of first light will require any adversary to open the door and to partially emerge from the structure to observe the team. If members of the team must be in front of the door or on both sides of the door then the breach point should be at least covered from first light and optimally should be covered by at least two operators that are splitting the door.

At the point that the breacher is approaching the door, a member of the team must move ahead of the breacher to provide security and will take a cover position at first light.

c) Covering the Flanks.

As the team is positioned at the breach point, they may also be exposed to potential threat from other openings in the skin of the structure such as windows and other doors. Members of the team that are not actively engaged in breaching or covering the breach point should be addressing these potential threats.

2. Method of entry.

The actual breaching method is referred to as the method of entry or MOE. It is important for teams to conduct an analysis of the breach point during the intelligence gathering phase of the operation to determine the most effective MOE. It is also important for the team to develop an alternate or supplemental MOE for each breach point to address the possibility that the primary MOE is ineffective.

a) Mechanical

The use of hand tools to cause sufficient mechanical damage to the door, the door jamb, the hinges, or the locking mechanism to enable the door to be opened or removed. This typically involves battering rams, sledge hammers, pry tools, pull hooks, or other tools. Operators should conduct documented training on these methods on a regular basis to maintain capability.

b) Ballistic

The use of a specialized breaching round fired from a 12 gauge shotgun. The breaching round is fired at the door jamb, locking mechanism, or hinges in order to cause sufficient damage to the door, the door jamb, the hinges, or the locking mechanism to enable the door to be opened or to enable mechanical MOE to effectively defeat the door.

The specialized breaching round is designed to pulverize upon contact with metal components of the locking mechanism, door jamb, or hinges so that it is less likely to penetrate into the space beyond the door with enough mass and energy to be lethal. If the specialized breaching round fails to contact these components, it is likely to retain sufficient mass and energy to cause serious injury or death if it strikes a person. Specialized certified and documented training is recommended for teams that require this capability.

c) Other

Other MOE require different levels of training and specialized equipment. Power saws, pneumatic or hydraulic devices, cutting torches, and explosives are all options for teams to consider depending on the operational needs. Particularly when a covert or stealthy breach is required, the team should always consider accessing a key from a person responsible for the location, if possible.

3. Contingency planning.

If a team must enter and clear a structure, then the breach must be successful. It is critical that the team plan for various contingencies related to the breach.

a) Alternate Breach

The team should pre-select an optimal alternate breach point prior to making the approach. Just as with the primary breach point, the alternate breach point must be analyzed for the most effective primary and secondary MOE. The breach plan may call for an element to breach and hold at the alternate breach point or may simply call for the team to move to the alternate breach point when necessary.

b) Delayed Breach

A delayed breach occurs when the primary MOE is initially ineffective and the successful breach does not occur within an acceptable period of time. It is important to remember that if a SWAT team is conducting a high risk operation and is delayed in their attempts to breach, then they are exposed to greater and greater risk due to their inability to observe or project force beyond the breach point. Additionally, if the team is executing a rescue operation, then the victims that they are attempting to rescue are exposed to greater and greater risk due to the team's inability to gain access to them.

A delayed breach plan may include utilizing a secondary MOE, breaching an alternate breach point, or porting a window or wall in order to observe or project force beyond the breach point.

c) Fouled Breach

A fouled breach occurs when the structural component that was attacked with the MOE is successfully defeated but some other physical barrier prevents the team from gaining entry. For example, this may be when a door is breached but there is a pile of furniture just inside the door that prevents the team from entering.

A fouled breach plan may include initiating the delayed breach plan and continuing to attempt to clear the barrier that is fouling the breach point, or it may include moving to an alternate breach point.

d) Failed Breach

A failed breach occurs when the team is unable to gain entry to the structure through a predetermined breach point. A fouled breach that cannot be cleared may lead to a failed breach. An entry point that cannot be breached with any available MOE may lead to a failed breach. A failed breach at a particular breach point may cause the team to move to an alternate breach point and to execute their delayed breach contingency plan.

It is also possible that a team will be unable to breach any of their predetermined entry points. The team must plan for this contingency. In a non-rescue operation, the failed breach plan may call for the team to fall back to a containment perimeter, develop more information and develop an additional breach plan, and attempting to communicate with the subjects inside the target location. In a rescue operation, the failed breach plan may call for the team to access additional equipment and attempt a breach at an unconventional location such as through a wall, ceiling, or floor, depending on the structure.

I. Enter, Search, Secure, and Clear - CQB

In its basic form, CQB refers to common techniques for moving around corners, moving into rooms, moving through hallways, and moving on stairs. The reason that effective CQB techniques are vital is that the team that is moving is at a tactical disadvantage to the adversary that is stationary and sitting in a potential ambush position. These techniques must be practiced regularly during training to ensure that all members of the team have a common understanding of their application and execution. These techniques must also be practiced in all conceivable operational conditions including low-light and in a chemical environment that requires team members to wear APRs.

1. Cornering

As an operator maneuvers around a corner, new terrain can be observed and covered. At the same time, the operator is exposed to any adversary that is covering the corner. Cornering is a balance between finding an angle of attack while minimizing the angle of exposure. The operator must maximize the use of cover and concealment by positioning his/her body so that the majority of vital areas are shielded by the apex of the corner during the maneuver. The operator must also maximize firepower superiority by using proper weapon handling techniques. The rate of movement will be determined by the scheme of maneuver and mission.

objectives of the team. The rate of movement may be slow and incremental or may be more rapid and involve larger “slices of pie.”

During cornering the operator should anticipate contact with an adversary. In the event that there is contact, the operator may do one or more of the following:

a) Challenge/Communicate.

The operator may pause while utilizing some cover and concealment of the corner and give verbal commands to the adversary.

b) Fire/Project Force

If faced with an imminent deadly threat, the operator may fire at the adversary in order to stop the threat. In the event of a threat that is less than an imminent deadly threat, the operator may fire impact munitions or other less lethal munitions or weapons at the adversary.

c) Push

Depending on the mission objectives and the perceived tactical situation, the operator may opt to push beyond the corner. Other members of the clearing cell must be prepared for this possibility and move with the operator to provide mutual support. This may be during a rescue operation when the default maneuver is to push or may be to exploit an opportunity to achieve and maintain the initiative in regards to this particular contact.

d) Hold

Depending on the mission objectives and the perceived tactical situation, the operator may opt to hold at the corner. Other members of the clearing cell must be prepared for this possibility and to provide support at the corner as necessary. This may be when the operator determines that more advantage can be gained by holding and exploiting the position at the corner. For example, the suspect that has been contacted is armed with an edged weapon and the team is preparing to deploy a less lethal weapon or is actively attempting to gain compliance verbally.

e) Pull Back

Depending on the mission objectives and the perceived tactical situation, the operator may opt to pull back from the corner. Other members of the clearing cell must be prepared for this possibility and support the operator as the clearing cell pulls back to a better covered and concealed location or at least establishes better positions in relation to the corner. This may be when the adversary immediately begins shooting at the corner and the operator is unable to establish firepower superiority. The clearing cell may pull back to move out of the adversary's cone of fire. This may be as part of taking a containment position with no immediate plan to push beyond the corner (non-hostage barricade) or it may be very brief as the clearing cell prepares to aggressively push beyond the corner (rescue operation).

2. Room Entry and Control

Room entry is different from cornering in that the clearing cell must typically move through a choke point into a room that has not been completely cleared. It is common that once the operators are inside the room they will be exposed to angles of threat that could not be cleared or covered from outside the room. This means that the clearing cell must be prepared to respond to potentially deadly threats while entering the room and once inside the room. The clearing cell, as the maneuver element, is in danger of entering an ambush by an adversary that is stationary in a covered or concealed position.

a) Threshold Assessment

The first step in a room entry is some form of threshold assessment. This is a maneuver that enables the clearing cell to observe, assess, identify, and diminish threats within in room without being fully exposed to angles of threat within the room. This maneuver is essentially the opposite of an immediate entry technique where a clearing cell makes an entry to the room regardless of the conditions inside the room and then must observe, assess, identify, and diminish threats within the room while being fully exposed to all angles of threat within the room. The threshold assessment also enables the clearing cell to assess the conditions within the room with regards to lighting, layout and contents to make the best initial movement into the room. The clearing cell is maximizing the use of cover and concealment during this maneuver. During the threshold assessment, while slicing the pie, all of the information listed in the above section that addressed "Cornering" applies.

- (1) Full Assessment. A full threshold assessment will start with the clearing cell on one side of the door or with the clearing cell splitting the door with operators on each side. When the cell is on one side of the door, the lead operator will essentially slice the pie across the door to the other side and conduct an assessment of the room from the threshold – a threshold assessment. The final position of the two lead operators in the cell is to be splitting the door with each operator covering into the room at about a forty-five degree angle from the wall and about a ninety degree angle from each other.

If the clearing cell has begun the threshold assessment from a position where they are splitting the door, then each of the lead operators will slice the pie towards the center of the door in order to assess the center of the room and then return to their initial positions on their respective forty-five degree angles. Each operator should conduct their assessment individually in order to prevent both operators being exposed simultaneously and potentially both entering the adversary's cone of fire.

- (2) Step Center. A partial threshold assessment will enable the lead operator in the clearing cell to assess the center of the room so that attention can be focused on the hard corners of the room upon entry. In this case, rather than slicing the pie all the way across the door to the opposite side, the lead operator slices the pie about half way across the door and then prepares to make a coordinated room entry. If the cell has started the threshold assessment while splitting the door, then only one operator will conduct an assessment of the center of the room and the clearing cell will then be ready to make a coordinated entry.

b) Coordinated Entry

The entry to the room must be coordinated in order to maximize the application of tactical principles. The coordinated entry enables the clearing cell to maximize the application of mutual support, numeric superiority, firepower superiority, and cover during maneuver. The purpose of perfecting the procedure for coordinating the entry is to minimize gaps and lag time between the two lead operators that are entering the room. The procedure also ensures that members of the clearing cell are mentally and physically prepared to make the entry.

- (1) Yielding. Upon completing the threshold assessment, one or both of the lead operators is covering a sector of the room from the threshold. Their weapons may be directed into the room at a depressed muzzle position. Yielding will determine which operator will move into the room first. The operator that will enter the room first will verbally indicate so by saying, "On me," while supporting the verbal communication with non-verbal indicator of a muzzle movement. The operator that will enter the room second, will acknowledge this by saying, "OK," and yielding by moving the weapon to the high or low port position so that the lead operator may safely move to the front. One operator may determine that the other operator should enter the room first. The operator in this case would yield by moving the weapon into the high or low port and would say, "On you." The other operator would acknowledge by saying, "OK," and giving the non-verbal acknowledgement of a muzzle movement.
- (2) Crossing vs Buttonhook. The crossing route takes the operator from one side of the door outside the room to the opposite side of the door inside the room – outside left to inside right. The buttonhook route takes the operator from one side of the door outside the room to the same side of the door inside the room – outside left to inside left. The crossing route is more efficient in that the operator is already looking and covering in that direction from outside the room whereas the buttonhook requires the operator to turn approximately 180 degrees while entering the room while assessing and manipulating the weapon into a cover position throughout the movement. Generally speaking, the second operator should be given the path of least resistance into the room which is typically the crossing route – this is intended to minimize lag time and gaps between the first and second operator into the room.
- (3) Route to the Door. Regardless as to whether the lead operator will cross or buttonhook, the first movement that the lead operator makes during the room entry should be to step center to double-check the center of the room. The lead operator then shifts focus and weapon position for optimal cornering into their respective hard corner and area of responsibility. As the lead operator is moving through the door, the second operator is moving forward and closer

to the door in order to minimize gaps and lag time between the two. Anytime during this process, up to this point, the clearing cell can decide not to make entry. Once the cell has committed to the entry and one operator has moved through the door, the second operator must go with them to provide mutual support.

c) Assess and Cover Area of Responsibility

As the clearing cell moves into the room, the operators must assess the areas of the room that were not visible during the threshold assessment, move away from the doorway, visually scan their entire area of responsibility, and establish a point of domination from which to cover their sector and communicate with other operators.

- (1) Hard Corners. The hard corners are the primary areas that are not visible during the threshold assessment. As members of the clearing cell are entering the room, the hard corners contain the greatest potential threat. In a center fed room, the hard corners will be opposite one another so each of the first two operators on the clearing cell will be depending on each other to cover their back. It is critical that lag time be minimized.
- (2) Maneuver Away from the Door. In the event that an armed adversary is in the room, the first operator to enter the room is likely to draw fire. The first operator should enter the room ready to engage an armed adversary and should draw fire away from the entry point. Rounds fired at the lead operator can also strike the second operator into the room. In order to minimize this potential, the lead operator should move away from the entry point in depth as well as laterally while the second (and any additional) operator should move away from the entry point but stay close to the entry wall, if possible.
- (3) Assess Sector. Each of the first two operators into the room has a sector, or area of responsibility that extends from their hard corner all the way back across the room to the opposite hard corner and/or clearing cell member. This entire sector must be scanned. The scan should include assessing whether all the other clearing cell members successfully entered the room.

- (4) Points of Domination on Strong Wall. Operators should move to a point of domination along the entry wall, or “strong wall”. This point should be far enough away from the entry point to allow all members of the clearing cell to enter the room while maintaining some dispersion. Operators should bear in mind that the further that they move away from the entry point, the more they expose themselves to angles of threat that they could not see from outside the room. The points of domination occupied by the clearing cell may be held for only a few seconds while they assess and coordinate their movements to clear the room or they may be held for several minutes while verbal commands are given to an unarmed subject within the room.

d) Identify Threats

As the operators conduct the threshold assessment, while they enter the room, and during the scan of their sector, they will be identifying potential threats. The level of threat posed will determine the appropriate action. If the threat requires immediate action, then operator will deal with the threat and then communicate to the rest of the clearing cell about the action taken. If the threat does not require immediate action, the operator will cover the threat and communicate to the clearing cell to identify the threat and location.

- (1) Immediate Threats. Any people that are armed with a firearm or are within six feet (reactionary gap) of the operator during the entry are considered immediate threats. These people should be dealt with prior to continuing any scan of the sector regardless of their position in relation to the hard corner. People that are armed with a firearm and present an imminent threat may be fired upon. People that are within six feet can either be physically controlled or pushed away in order to create more distance. Once they are no longer an immediate threat the scan of the sector should be completed.
- (2) Armed People. Armed people within the operator’s sector that present an imminent threat may be fired upon. Once they do not pose an imminent threat the scan of the sector should be completed.

- (3) People. Unarmed people may be bypassed during the initial scan of the sector and then addressed once the entire sector has been assessed for immediate threats and armed people. Once the operators have reached their points of domination, they will address people within the room depending on their location and behavior.
- (4) Open Doors. Open doors from the room will expose the clearing cell to angles of threat from outside the room. Not all operators will be able to cover these angles of threat. Operators may need to adjust their points of domination to provide mutual support so that no operator is exposed to an open door without cover.
- (5) Voids. This refers to areas within the room that cannot be seen from the points of domination but are not inside or under furniture. For example, the space behind a desk or a bed that is not visible upon entry. The threat posed by voids is that an adversary can attack from a void without opening a door or moving anything – the adversary need merely stick a firearm out and begin shooting. Voids are also referred to as “dead space”.
- (6) Hides. This refers to hiding places within the room such as under or inside a bed, or inside a kitchen cabinet. An adversary in a hide can pose a deadly threat when discovered but is not an imminent threat until the clearing cell takes some kind of action to reveal them or until the adversary leaves the hide.
- (7) Closed Doors. These doors may lead to large rooms or small closets. The clearing cell can cover them and the doors themselves provide a degree of concealment. An adversary must open the door to attack the team and will not know exactly where the operators are when initially opening the door. The clearing cell can decide when to open these doors and where to position their personnel prior to opening them.

e) Clear the Room

When conducting CQB training, techniques for clearing the room should be practiced and refined constantly. Operators should start with simple room layouts and with minimal furniture within the rooms and then progress to more and more complex threat layouts.

Teams should practice clearing rooms of various layouts and contents with two operators, three operators, four operators and more depending on their team composition. In order for the techniques to be simple and flexible, it is useful to think of these threats as one of three different types – a single threat area inside the room, a room that presents all threat areas in a single direction, and a room that presents threats in opposing directions.

This section describes a two operator clearing cell, but the same techniques can be utilized with more than two operators within a room.

- (1) Single Threat Area. When a room has only one threat area within it, both operators are able to focus on that threat area. This may be a simple room with no doors leading out of it with a bed or desk or other furniture in the room that creates a single void that might conceal a suspect. It may also be a simple room that contains a single suspect and no other follow-on threats.
 - (a) The maneuver is to triangulate on the threat area and to maintain that triangulation while moving into position to observe and cover the threat area. This is commonly called an “L-shaped” approach. Both operators can cover the threat area and move in such a way as to allow at least one of the operators to clear the area.
 - (b) The possibility of friendly fire is reduced by maintaining the correct distance to threat and the angle of cover/fire. Both operators should maintain approximately the same distance to the threat. This essentially keeps them “on line” in a way similar to shooting on the flat range – neither of them is truly in front of the other. Angles of cover/fire should be kept to approximately ninety degrees to each other or less so that the operators will not unintentionally shoot towards each other.
- (2) Aligned Threats. When a room has multiple threat areas within it but they are all aligned along one side of the room the operators must focus on different threat areas but are able to keep each other within their field of view. This allows for the operators to maintain excellent awareness of where their own teammates are at all times. This may be a

situation where a bed creates a void on the left side of the room with an open or closed door beyond the bed but also on the left side of the room.

- (a) The maneuver is to bring both operators together so that one can cover the near threat and the other can provide long cover on threat areas beyond the initial threat. In this manner the threat areas are cleared in order from near to far.
 - (b) The possibility of friendly fire is reduced by ensuring that the long cover operator has proper weapon position. Whenever providing long cover, the weapon's muzzle must be well beyond the operator to the front.
- (3) Opposing Threats. When a room contains multiple threat areas that are in opposing directions the operators cannot cover their area of responsibility and also see the other operator in the room. This makes it difficult to maintain awareness of where their teammates are or what they are doing at all times. This may be a room with a bed that creates a void on the left side of the room and an open door on the right side of the room.
- (a) The maneuver is to bring both operators together so that they can cover in opposite directions while maintaining some awareness of the other's location. The awareness of the other's location comes from the operators maintaining some degree of physical contact with each other. This is commonly referred to as being "back to back" or "plate to plate".
 - (b) Friendly fire is less of an issue with this situation since the threats are in opposite directions. The potential problem here is that if the operators do not maintain awareness of each other's positions they could easily move beyond the cover provided by their teammate and be exposed to a threat area to their rear. By moving while "plate to plate" neither operator will move ahead of the operator providing their cover.

- f) Hold and Cover Follow On Threats

Follow on threats are those that are beyond the footprint of the room that the clearing cell has cleared. Essentially, they will be other rooms or hallways that are adjoined to the room being held by the clearing cell. Operators will cover these threats and determine the next direction of maneuver. During a dynamic movement, the door may only be covered for a few seconds and then a clearing cell will enter it. During a deliberate movement, the door may be covered for an extended period of time – possibly an hour or more – while other follow on threats are cleared.

g) Opening Closed Doors

During CQB operations, clearing cells will encounter closed doors. Closed doors will provide some degree of concealment for the clearing cell – an adversary cannot see the clearing cell until the door is opened. The clearing cell should utilize techniques and procedures that give them maximum tactical advantage when opening closed doors. When initially encountering closed doors, operators should cover them from first light until they can assess optimum positioning at the door. This will ensure that if the door were to be suddenly opened by an adversary, at least one operator would be in position to assess and react to that potential threat.

(1) Positioning.

The clearing cell should consider the team's positioning prior to opening a door, if possible. The team should consider the possibility that as soon as they touch a door knob or open a door, an adversary will begin to shoot at the door and the area around the door. When possible, the team should move to a position where they are not visible or exposed to angles of threat from within the space beyond the door prior to opening it. On a typical push door, this would be the knob side, for example. When the interior structure is not likely to provide hard cover, the team should consider the possibility that rounds may penetrate the wall within several feet of the door and should take a position with a reasonable stand-off from the door.

(2) Plating the Door.

During dynamic movement and in some cases during deliberate movement, it will not be possible to position all members of the team out of angles of threat when opening a door. In these cases, an operator must occupy and cover

the angles of threat prior to opening the door. The concept is that an operator taking that position, blocking the angle of threat with his/her ballistic plates, and being able to immediately return fire is better than simply opening the door and exposing the rear or flank of another operator that is not focused on that angle of threat.

(3) Threshold Assessment.

It is still important for the clearing cell to conduct a threshold assessment prior to making a room entry when opening a closed door. The recommended procedure is to cover first light, consider optimum positioning, plate the door if necessary, open the door, assess for any adversary action, then conduct a threshold assessment and coordinated room entry as if the door had been open all along. The “technique” of riding the door into the room while it is being opened is not recommended as it forces the operator to enter a room without an assessment and with the weapon out of position for use (violates multiple tactical principles).

(4) Breaching.

If it becomes necessary to breach an interior door when clearing from room to room, the procedure is essentially the same as when breaching an exterior door. Just as when breaching an exterior door, the team is exposed to greater and greater risk as they are positioned at the door and unable to observe or project force beyond the door.

3. Hallway Movement

In addition to maneuvering from room to room, a team must be proficient at maneuvering from room to hallway, within hallways, and from hallway to room. Although it has been said that a hallway is just a long, narrow room, a hallway presents many of the most challenging aspects of CQB. The challenge of the hallway is that it is narrow and potentially presents multiple angles of exposure to the team – sometimes from both the front and the rear. The fact that it is narrow means that the team cannot achieve dispersion within the hall which means that any rounds fired at the team have a high probability of striking members of the team and it is challenging for multiple members of the team to safely and effectively return fire. Even a typical residential hallway may have several doorways that connect to the hall and present multiple potential angles of exposure

to the team and these angles can be a very close proximity to one another and to the team.

a) Avoid Hallways

When possible, teams should avoid moving through hallways. When there is a choice, it is better to clear from room to room than through a hallway. When the team must move through a hallway, the team's techniques and procedures should minimize time and exposure in the hallway and should maximize available firepower in the direction of threat. Time and exposure in the hallway can be minimized by assessing the hallway and deciding on a direction of movement while still in the relative safety of the room that the team has cleared and is occupying prior to entering the hallway.

b) Room to Hallway

When maneuvering from a room to a hallway, the threshold evaluation and coordinated entry through the door can be executed the same way as when maneuvering from room to room. As the team enters the hallway, there are the same initial concerns with the hard corners which are basically each direction inside the hallway. Once inside the hallway, the team prepares to maneuver to the next follow-on threat. The techniques and procedures during dynamic movement will be different than during deliberate movement. During dynamic movement the team will be utilizing initiative based tactics and the lead operator for each direction in the hallway will maneuver to the next follow-on threat and wait for support in order to address that threat. During deliberate movement, the clearing cell will move as an element to the next designated follow-on threat and address that threat.

c) Within Hallways

When moving in any particular direction in a hallway, the threats should generally be prioritized as follows: direction of travel, open doors, closed doors, direction of origin. When possible, at least two operators should be in a position to observe and project force in the direction of travel. The lead operator will focus on the closest threat while the second operator will focus on the long threat or the rest of the hallway in the direction of travel. If the team is maneuvering through a hallway and the area to their rear is unsecure, then the last operator in the clearing cell will focus on the area behind the cell as a "rear guard".

d) Hallway to Room

The maneuver from hallway to room is executed in a similar manner as room to room. The threshold evaluation and coordinated room entry is essentially the same. One difference is that cover beyond the entry point – in the direction of travel – must be maintained by a member of the clearing cell. Another consideration is that the cell is attempting to limit their exposure in the hallway and their exposure to other follow-on threats adjacent to the hallway. A full threshold assessment may not be prudent because it will require the lead operator to turn his/her back to the unsecured hallway and therefore require the long cover operator to move well beyond the entry point. In most structures it will be advantageous for the lead operator to step center and conduct a partial threshold assessment and then initiate a coordinated room entry. A common exception to this general rule is that in a large commercial structure with very wide hallways the team may take advantage of the additional room to maneuver and to disperse and may conduct a full threshold assessment prior to entering a room.

e) Long Cover

Providing long cover while in the hallway is critical. As the clearing cell maneuvers in the hallway, at least one operator must be in a position that provides clear observation and field of fire in the direction of the long threat down the hallway and any additional threat areas that the lead operator cannot focus on.

f) Cross Cover

When a hallway is wide enough, the two lead operators within a hallway may choose to split to opposite sides of the hallway while they advance. Each will cross cover to the opposite side of the hallway. This enables each of them to maximize their ability to observe into follow-on threats as they approach them. Once the two lead operators get close to the follow-on threat and are preparing to make entry, then their focus will shift from cross cover to traditional close cover/long cover roles. The team must practice this shift of focus so that coverage is maximized – using verbal and/or non-verbal communications to support the procedure is recommended.

g) Hall Boss

As previously described, the term hall boss has several different meanings within the SWAT community. The important consideration is that when a clearing cell is moving through a hallway they are maintaining awareness and control of the hallway but once the cell enters a room, they lose awareness and control of the hallway. The team's procedures should enable them to maintain control of the hallway so that it is not necessary to re-enter an unsecured area every time the team moves back into the hallway.

- (1) During dynamic movement and initiative based tactics this is typically accomplished with a "rolling point" or hall boss that constantly changes as the team advances along the hallway and members of the team form clearing cells and make entry to rooms.
- (2) During deliberate movement the team may choose to have a member of the team that is not attached to the clearing cell serve as the hall boss. This is done by having the lead member of the team that is not maneuvering with the cell taking a covered and concealed position within a room occupied by the team and covering the hallway from behind the clearing cell when they are inside a room. This operator is covering the hall and is able to address threats or report observations of conditions in the hallway while the clearing cell is occupied within a room.

Alternatively, the team may choose to have a member of the clearing cell serve as hall boss. This is done by having the last member of the clearing cell that leaves the hall to move backwards or sideways into the room and maintain cover of the hallway. The disadvantage to this second option is that if the clearing cell encounters a suspect within the room, this last operator is either going to stand in the "fatal funnel" while covering the hallway or is going to give up the hallway to move to a better position and address the threat in the room.

h) Breaching

When entering and maneuvering through hallways, the team must consider the probability that they will encounter a locked door and will need to breach it in order to enter the next follow-on threat. If the clearing cell is unable to efficiently initiate a breaching procedure, then the cell will spend more time in the hallway

waiting for support from a breacher. It is recommended that the breaching of interior doors – especially in hallways – be addressed during training and during the operational planning phase.

- (1) Tools. As with all breaching operations, the anticipated breaching targets will determine the types of breaching equipment carried by the team. Many residential structures have hollow core interior doors and can typically be kicked open. Many commercial structures, however, have solid core wood doors or metal doors set in metal jambs and these doors can be as difficult to breach as typical exterior doors. For these doors the team may consider carrying a variation of a halligan bar, some form of battering ram, ballistic breaching shotguns, and even explosive interior door charges, depending on the team capability, the mission, and the target structure.
- (2) Deliberate Movement Procedure. Once the clearing cell has determined that they will have to conduct a breaching operation on an interior door within a hallway, they will have to set up to provide security in the hallway and enable the breacher to work on the door. The operator that had been responsible for long cover will continue with that role and move into a position that best protects the cell from threats other than the entry point. The next two operators will cover the entry point in a similar manner to how it would be done on an exterior breach point – by splitting the door. The fourth operator will be the breacher and will move to the knob side of the door to execute the breach. This procedure enables the two operators that are covering the door to conduct a threshold assessment and coordinate a room entry while the breacher and the long cover operator are the last ones to enter the room.
- (3) Dynamic Movement Procedure. During dynamic movement and initiative based tactics it is likely that a clearing cell will be comprised of only two operators. If a door is encountered that cannot be kicked open then one of the two operators will have to utilize a breaching tool or the door will have to be held and covered until an operator with a breaching tool is available for support. If a team intends to conduct a dynamic rescue operation in a structure that is likely to have interior doors that will be difficult to breach, it is recommended that all members of the team have some form of breaching capability. This might be accomplished

by having every member of the team carry a pry tool or a ballistic breaching shotgun, for example. The procedure for a two operator breach is for the operator with the breaching tool to access the knob side of the door while the other operator moves to cover first light.

i) Dual Flow

The team will encounter two opposing – or nearly opposing – open doors in a hallway. This presents the team with the challenge of maneuvering through a hallway and entering at least one of the rooms while also maintaining cover on the hallway beyond the entry point and on the opposing door. If the team has sufficient personnel, they may opt to send two clearing cells down the hall to enter and clear both of the opposing rooms simultaneously. The advantage of this technique is that neither room is left unsecured and cannot be used as a position for an adversary to engage the team from. The disadvantage, especially in a large commercial structure, is that each of the rooms being entered may contain threats or adversaries that overwhelm the clearing cell and, due to the dual flow technique, the personnel that would normally be available for support are not available.

j) Hallway Intersections

The team will encounter T and 4-Way intersections in hallways. In some cases the team will know which direction they will maneuver prior to approaching the intersection, in other cases the team will have to maneuver to the intersection and hold it briefly while they determine which direction to move. The method of movement – deliberate vs dynamic – and the size of the hallway and structure will determine the technique used by the team to approach and secure the intersection but the technique will always be driven by an application of the tactical principles.

- (1) Dynamic. Dynamic movement involves initiative based tactics and maneuver on multiple threat areas simultaneously. This also applies to hallways. The lead operator will maneuver up to the point that support is needed. This will be just short of the intersection where all potential threats to the front can be covered by the operator. The operator will wait for the necessary support – one additional operator for a T intersection and two additional operators for a 4-Way. Once necessary support is available, the rearmost operator will squeeze up/tap up and

the operators will move into the intersection. The immediate left or right hallways will be treated as hard corners and assessed first then the operators will advance to the next forward threat and wait for support.

- (2) Deliberate. Deliberate movement involves a clearing cell directed by the team leader and maneuver on only one new threat area at a time. The cell approaches the intersection with the personnel needed to secure it. The lead operators may cross cover as appropriate if the hallway is wide enough. Immediate left or right hallways will be treated as hard corners and assessed first. Once a direction of travel for the cell is determined, the operator covering that direction will become the “point man” while operators covering other directions will maintain coverage until members of the cell have moved beyond them at which point they will fall in to the rear of the cell.

k) Last Room

The team should be aware that once a follow-on threat is identified as the last remaining threat, or “last room”, then the techniques and procedures for approaching and entering that threat can revert to typical room to room techniques. The factors that make maneuvering from hallway to room challenging and more dangerous no longer exist once the entry point is the last remaining threat within the hallway.

4. Stairway Movement and Changing Levels within a Structure

Stairway movement involves several unique considerations. The structure of stairways creates additional challenges for a clearing cell and the movement of a clearing cell to a different level of the structure should be a deliberate decision so that the team itself maintains integrity. The construction of stairs makes it easier for operators to trip and forces them to move more slowly. Stairways can also expose the team to multiple angles of threat including both vertical and horizontal corners. Some stairs present a threat area directly overhead from a landing or balcony. Stairs in multi-story buildings present angles of threat both upwards and downwards.

a) Cornering and Maneuvering on Stairs.

The clearing cell should assess the design of the stairway and determine the primary angles of threat. The clearing cell should

then position operators so that they are able to cover emerging threat angles and slice the pie from optimum positions. The clearing cell should also understand that they will not be able to effectively move quickly either upwards or downwards. The concept of simply trying to move quickly up or down stairs is not an effective technique when the clearing cell meets opposition – it is similar to simply rushing into a room without assessing or being in a position to effectively respond.

b) Personnel

The team should only dedicate the necessary number of personnel to initially maneuver up or down a stairway. Personnel should not be bunched up more than necessary when maneuvering on stairs. At the same time, the team should be prepared to support the clearing cell within the stairway if they come under fire. The team should also ensure that as the clearing cell reaches the next level of the structure that they have sufficient personnel to safely and effectively achieve a position of control on that level (foothold). For example, a team may send two operators as the lead clearing cell to move up a stairway, with another four operators ready to support in the event of contact on the stairs and to move to the next level when necessary.

c) Dynamic Movement

During dynamic movement the team may encounter a stairway. Depending on the mission and the threat assessment, the team should consider utilizing a distraction device to facilitate movement to the next level. Additionally, whereas a team utilizing initiative based tactics may normally move into a new room with as few as two operators, the team should consider only moving to a new level with a minimum of four or six operators.

5. Ballistic Shields

Ballistic shields can provide an asset to the team if the team uses them properly and conducts regular training with them. The primary advantage of ballistic shields is that they provide additional ballistic protection to the team when used appropriately. The primary disadvantage of ballistic shields is that they encumber the shield operator and significantly degrade the shooting ability of the shield operator when compared to the operator's shooting ability without the shield. Specialized shields that will defeat rifle rounds are very heavy and may need to be mounted on a rolling base to be effectively used during CQB operations. In many situations the

ballistic shield primarily provides protection for the operator carrying the shield because the direction of threat could be from many angles not covered by the shield. The team should practice integrating the use of ballistic shields into their CQB techniques and procedures if they wish to use this capability.

a) Cornering

The ballistic shield can be effective when cornering because the shield is only needed to protect against a single angle of threat. It will be difficult or impossible to observe an adversary from behind a shield before the adversary is able to observe and fire upon the shield operator, but the shield will provide some ballistic protection.

b) Room Entry

The ballistic shield can be used during the threshold assessment, the coordinated room entry, and the process of clearing the room itself. The shield would be used during the threshold assessment to slice the pie and assess the room. During the room entry, the shield operator would attempt to be the lead operator into the room and to address the greatest threat area within the room. Once in the room the shield operator can maneuver to address the greatest threat area.

c) Hallways

Due to the channelizing effects of the hallway, a ballistic shield can provide good protection for the clearing cell. Just as an adversary has a good probability of shooting a team member if they fire a lot of rounds along a hallway, the shield has a good probability of stopping or degrading those rounds. In a hallway the shield can provide protection for several team members because the direction of threat will likely be covered by the shield. This is particularly true of larger heavier shields that are rolled in front of the team rather than smaller, hand held shields.

d) Stairways

Stairs present multiple angles of exposure to the clearing cell and prevent the clearing cell from moving efficiently. The ballistic shield can be used to cover the clearing cell from the greatest direction of threat – commonly overhead during movement up a stairway that has a landing or balcony above it.

6. Deliberate Movement¹⁵

An overall scheme of maneuver utilized by the team when time is not a component of mission success. The team moves in a deliberate manner, maximizes all tactical principles, maximizes communication and situational awareness, clears only one new threat area at a time, and conducts all necessary detailed searches along the way. The team may utilize tools and technology to augment this clearing method by sending a robot or UAV ahead of their position, using pole cameras or mirrors to look around corners, or using under door cameras to look into rooms prior to opening doors.

a) Time

Meeting operational objectives, or the objectives of the current portion of the mission, does not depend on a particular timeline for completion. This can be when a structure or area must be rendered secure but it does not matter how long it takes. This can also be during the covert movement phase of a deliberate rescue operation utilizing the Stealth to Contact or Stealth to Breach mission profile.

b) Tactics, Tools, and Technology

The team should utilize any technique or tool that will give them a tactical advantage. This could include using robots, UAVs (drones), mirrors, and pole cameras to look around corners or in through windows. Of course, the most common tactic when resolving a potential barricade incident is to use chemical irritants to degrade the adversary's ability to effectively resist. The team can begin a search of a structure and then decide to pull back and approach from a different direction. The team may take advantage of floor plans and coordinate with other units to hold choke points or portions of the structure while the team maneuvers through unsecured areas.

c) Pacing

The team moves at a pace that emphasizes situational awareness and coordinated maneuver. There is no need to rush. The team can pause for breaks on prolonged operations. The team can pause to wait for additional assets if necessary.

d) Communication and Situational Awareness

The team will frequently communicate out to the TOC to keep the tactical and incident commanders updated on their progress and location. The team leader will communicate within the team about clearing cell dispositions and locations to maximize situational awareness. The team leader may move around within the team to gain an understanding of the big picture and layout of the structure.

e) One New Threat at a Time

One of the factors that differentiates dynamic movement from deliberate clearing is that during deliberate clearing the team will attempt to only enter or clear one new threat area at a time and will use a larger clearing cell to do it. This is done so that if a clearing cell encounters an adversary, there are shots fired, or a team member is injured, the rest of the team is not actively searching and is available for support.

f) Detailed Searches

During deliberate movement, the team conducts detailed searches as they maneuver through the structure. Once a clearing cell has entered a room, they will not move beyond that room until they have conducted a detailed search of any location that a person could hide.

g) Prisoner Control

During deliberate movement, the team will determine the most advantageous manner to control subjects that are detained during the operation. The team has time to determine and execute the best option. The team may choose to evacuate subjects completely out of the structure. The team must determine the best, secured route to move these subjects out of the structure and must have a safe and secure route away from the structure to the containment perimeter if this option is to be used. The team may choose to create a prisoner collection point within the structure and hold subjects at that location while the team continues to maneuver through the structure. The team must have adequate personnel to safely secure these subjects and to continue maneuver simultaneously. The team may need to depend on non-SWAT support personnel for prisoner control. These issues should be addressed during training and during the operational planning cycle of these operations.

7. Dynamic Movement ^{16 17 18 19}

An overall scheme of maneuver utilized by the team when time is a component of mission success. The National Tactical Officers Association defines a dynamic entry as, “rapid entry into and rapid movement through a target location. Speed of execution is critical when using this tactic, which is meant to surprise and overwhelm the suspect(s), and thereby prevent them from taking some unwanted action.”²⁰ This method of clearing is only possible when the team has sufficient personnel to clear and hold the area during the initial clearing phase or when the team has decided that holding the area is not a priority because mission success depends on rapidly reaching a certain location or rapidly securing a particular known threat.

a) Time

Dynamic movement is used when time is a factor that impacts operational objectives. This would be when the team must rapidly secure the structure during a rescue operation in order to prevent or mitigate harm to victims, when the team is tasked with securing a location that contains easily destroyed evidence, or when the risk posed by the target itself requires that the team minimize time on target such as when an explosive, chemical, biological, or radiological threat is present.

b) Surprise, Diversion, and Distraction

Dynamic movement is characterized by the team aggressively maneuvering through the structure. The team is maneuvering whereas the adversary can be lying in wait in an ambush position. The team is sacrificing some tactical advantage due to the requirement that the structure be rapidly secured. In order to attempt to offset this tactical disadvantage, the team should maximize surprise, diversion, and distraction. The team can utilize tactics, techniques, and tools such as covert approach, covert breach, stealth movement, multiple breach points, port and cover elements at windows or walls away from entry points, distraction devices and bang poles, and less lethal munitions deployed at multiple windows.

c) Pacing

It is important to understand that although the team must rapidly secure the target area, “Team members should only move as fast as they can accurately shoot, process information and support their teammates.”²¹ It is not the fact that individual team members are

moving more quickly that enables the team to rapidly secure the target, it is the techniques and procedures that the team uses. Proper pacing during dynamic maneuver also relates to the pacing of securing subjects within the structure. During deliberate maneuver, a clearing cell may hold on a corner and verbally challenge a subject to secure them whereas during dynamic maneuver the clearing cell will move aggressively to the subject and control them without unnecessary delay. Proper pacing during dynamic maneuver means eliminating lag time or delay in every aspect of the operation.

d) Multiple Threat Areas Simultaneously

One of the factors that differentiates dynamic movement from deliberate clearing is that during dynamic clearing the team will enter and clear multiple new threat areas at a time and will use a smaller clearing cell to do it – typically a minimum of two operators rather than four. The individual operators are utilizing initiative based tactics rather than being controlled and directed by the team leader. This is done so that the team can rapidly control the target area. It is critical that the planning phase identifies whether or not the team has the personnel necessary to safely and effectively control the target area utilizing dynamic movement and identifies a limit of advance, if necessary. For example, an entry team of eight operators may be able to secure a typical residential structure utilizing dynamic movement but would not be able to secure a larger commercial structure or even an unusually large residence – multiple entry teams may be necessary for these larger structures.

e) Initial Clear, Link Up, and then Secondary Search

Rather than conduct a detailed search during the initial clearing maneuver, the team will rapidly move through the target area looking for people in places from which they would pose an imminent threat. The team may not, for example, look inside mattresses and box springs. The team will conduct the initial clearing maneuver and then will link up throughout the target area. The purpose of the link up is to establish team presence and control throughout the target. Once this is done, and normally after any known subjects are secured and removed from the target area, the team will conduct a systematic secondary search to ensure that no additional subjects are hiding within the structure.

A secondary search is conducted after a team has established control and points of domination throughout a target area utilizing dynamic movement. The secondary search is meant to locate hides that may have been overlooked on the initial maneuver through the target and clear those and other identified hides. The secondary search in each area should be conducted by at least two operators – one to actively search and one to provide overwatch and cover. The secondary search should also be conducted in a systematic way so that control and domination of the target area is maintained during the search and no area within the target is overlooked. This is also when any specialized searches may be conducted of attic spaces or crawl spaces.

f) Prisoner Control

During dynamic movement, the team will typically establish the most expedient reasonable control over subjects in order to maintain the initiative and overall pacing throughout the target area. Typically, during the initial push of the operation, subjects will be left in place with hands visible or directed to a prone position with hands visible and kept under observation by a team member. Multiple subjects within one room may be consolidated into one area so that one or two team members can efficiently maintain control. Subjects that are not compliant may be handcuffed, but typically subjects will not be handcuffed until after the initial clearing of the target area in the interest of expediency.

Once the initial clear is completed and the team has established a link throughout the target area, then the individual subjects will be secured as necessary and reasonable given the circumstances. This may include a frisk for weapons and/or handcuffing, but no detailed searches are typically conducted at this point. The team will identify a prisoner collection point and consolidate all detained subjects to that location for efficient control. Once known subjects are consolidated, the team will conduct the systematic secondary search for any additional subjects.

8. Push or Hold

Throughout CQB maneuvers the team will decide whether to push or hold on corners, doors or other choke points. Typically, the team will default to push when conducting dynamic movement and will default to hold when conducting deliberate movement. The team will also have various contingency plans depending on the type of operation. For example, during a high risk warrant service the team may utilize dynamic

movement and will default to push but if shots are fired from a threat area that the team has not yet entered, they may have a contingency that calls for them to hold and communicate – essentially transitioning from a warrant service to an armed barricade response.

9. Distraction Devices

Noise Flash Distraction Devices contain flash powder and produce a bright light, a loud noise, and a sudden increase in atmospheric pressure. NFDDs can be utilized to cause a startle-flinch response on the part of any adversaries in close proximity to the device when it functions. The team can take advantage of this startle-flinch response when cornering or making a room entry. Any time that the team is preparing to enter an area that they believe is covered by an adversary, the team may decide to use a NFDD to gain a tactical advantage (in accordance with their specific policies). It is important to understand that the startle-flinch response only effects the adversary for a few seconds and the team's maneuver must be closely timed with the function of the device. When utilizing a NFDD during CQB, the team must be ready to react to one of three situations:

- (1) The NFDD is successfully deployed and functions as expected. – Continue mission as intended.
- (2) The NFDD is deployed but fails to function. – Consider deploying a second NFDD. Has the reason for the initial NFDD dissipated?
- (3) The team intends to deploy a NFDD but cannot as a result of something the operator deploying the device observes. – The action taken will depend on the circumstances and the condition of the device. Was the decision not to deploy made prior to the pin being pulled or once the pin was pulled? Is there a safe alternate location in immediate proximity to allow the device to function?

Note: Distraction devices will be covered in more detail in a separate lesson plan. It is recommended that prior to handling, being issued, or deploying any distraction device that officers receive documented training in accordance with the manufacturer of the specific device.

10. Attics and Crawl Spaces

In many cases, if a suspect seeks refuge in an attic or crawl space, the suspect will move as far away from the entrance as possible and hide. Due to limited access, limited mobility, and limited visibility SWAT operators are at a significant disadvantage when maneuvering into an attic or crawl space. An adversary that is armed and intent on assaulting an

operator will have a high probability of success. Small attic and crawl space entrances should be initially cleared by mirrors and lights. Bright lights shining into the area from a dark area may provide the first officer to enter an attic or crawl space with a wall of light to work behind and may make it difficult for the adversary to see the operator. If there is a strong belief that a suspect is inside an attic or crawl space, consider using chemical munitions to dislodge the suspect. Also, consider making additional ports to observe into the attic or crawl space so that the natural opening is not the only one that the suspect must hide from.

J. Actions on Objective/Consolidate/Reorganize

During planning and briefing, various actions that the team may take once within the target location and during specific phases of the operation will be identified. Some of these action on the objective may be unique to the particular operation and some “actions on” may be common to all operations of a particular type.

Planning, techniques, and procedures must allow for the CQB activity to be supported as necessary throughout the operation. As personnel are available for additional actions on the objective, or are made available due to necessity, these personnel are consolidated and reorganized into task elements to get these actions accomplished. The following are common actions that will be taken by the team prior to or after a target location is cleared and CQB activities are complete:

1. Prisoner Control

Subjects that are detained by the team will be secured. It is important to remember that, depending on the operation, these subjects may be victims, witnesses, suspects, or other individuals that were within the team’s operational area. Typically, a prisoner collection point will be identified and secured individuals will be brought to that location so that they can be monitored by a specific task element. If the subjects must be kept separate for any reason, then multiple prisoner collection points may need to be created. If possible, the team should record where individuals were originally located and detained.

2. Interior Security

Depending on the nature of the incident, the entire operational area or parts of it will likely be designated as a crime scene. Initially, the team may need to maintain control of these areas until relieved by other law enforcement personnel. Interior security may also need to be maintained if investigators will be handling, segregating, interviewing, and searching suspects within the target area.

3. Exterior Security

Depending on the nature of the incident and operation, the team may need to establish an isolation perimeter around the target area. Assuming the operational area is secure, there is no longer a need for a containment perimeter, but an isolation perimeter may be needed to provide security for all personnel that are working on the scene. (Common example: SWAT personnel enter and clear a structure while non-SWAT personnel establish a containment perimeter. Once the structure is clear, SWAT personnel establish an isolation perimeter, if necessary, while the non-SWAT personnel move to the interior of the structure for investigation and other follow-up activities.

K. Withdraw

This is a tactical maneuver and involves the team leaving the operational area in a systematic manner that enables them to account for all personnel and equipment and to maintain security during departure.

1. Prepare to Withdraw

When the team leader or commander determines that the SWAT team is no longer needed on scene, the team will be directed to prepare to withdraw. Each clearing cell or task element within the team will ensure that they are ready to withdraw from the target location. If they are currently performing a task, they will need to advise the team leader that they need relief prior to withdrawal. For example, if two SWAT officers are conducting prisoner control when told to prepare to withdraw, they would notify that they need at least two officers for prisoner control at their location prior to withdrawal. This is also when all operators will account for all of their individual equipment and any team equipment that they utilized during the operation. As each clearing cell or task element is prepared to withdraw, they will pass that status up the chain of command until the entire team is prepared to withdraw.

2. Maintain Security

The team should realize that they are not “clear” from an operation until they are all the way back to their staging area. They could potentially come under threat or be recalled to the incident location to respond to an emergency at any time during the withdrawal. Security and individual readiness should be maintained the entire time. The various task elements of the team should be withdrawn in a logical sequence that provides for security to be maintained. For example, the prisoner control element can withdraw and establish security at the team vehicles, then the interior

security element can withdraw and move to the vehicles and prepare them for movement, the exterior or isolation perimeter can then withdraw and mount up in the vehicles, and finally, the prisoner control element – now performing security at the vehicles – can mount up once the vehicles are ready to depart.

3. Furthest in, First out.

Part of maintaining security during the systematic and deliberate withdrawal from a target location is the concept of “furthest in, first out.” This means that the operators and task elements that are furthest away from transportation vehicles or furthest away from the route out of the operational area will be the first operators and task elements to leave their positions. This ensures that no individual or group is left on target or is left with a large gap of coverage and support during this withdrawal.

4. Account for Personnel

Once the team is assembled and ready to withdraw, the team leaders will conduct an additional check to ensure that all personnel are accounted for.

5. Account for Equipment

Once all personnel are assembled, accounted for, and ready to withdraw, the team leaders will conduct an additional check to ensure that all team equipment is accounted for.

L. Control and Arrest Techniques during CQB

The primary goal of most law enforcement tactical operations is to control people within a target area (open area, structure, or vehicle) and render the area safe for some kind of investigation, enforcement action, to render aid to victims, or to protect people from harm. The tactical team is heavily armed and prepared to use deadly force if necessary but the overwhelming majority of operations will be resolved without gunfire. SWAT operators must conduct training on control and arrest techniques within the context of SWAT operations. Most resistance encountered during SWAT operations is non-lethal, yet operators must be prepared and equipped to efficiently respond to a deadly threat at very close range with little reaction time during CQB. Operators must be able to accurately assess a subject's actions and apply appropriate control countermeasures – including physical control techniques. Officers must also understand how their individual ability to control a subject impacts the overall mission of the team.

1. Legal Issues

a) Standard

SWAT operators are held to the exact same legal standard that all law enforcement personnel operate under. Use of force must be objectively reasonable under the totality of the circumstances as reasonably perceived by an officer on scene at the time. What is unique to many SWAT operations are the “totality of the circumstances”. There are some use of force factors and variables that are common to many SWAT operations but are unlike any in other law enforcement encounters.

b) Factors and Variables

(1) The High Risk Environment

When the team is directed to resolve a high risk situation, the objective will be to establish control over a specific target area including all persons within that area. Whether a subject is ultimately classified as a suspect, a victim, or other, all persons will initially be considered potentially armed and dangerous. In some cases, a team member will enter an area and find more than one person that must be controlled. The officer must be able to shift quickly between applying a physical control technique, firing a weapon at a lethal threat, and then back to a physical control technique. Subjects that resist must be controlled so they can do no harm to the team or others, subjects in choke points must be controlled to facilitate movement of the team, and even compliant subjects must be controlled down and away from fields of fire both for their safety and to facilitate effective action of the team. The control techniques used must be effective in establishing physical control but also enable the operator to immediately employ the primary or secondary weapon. Although aggressive and deliberate in nature, the techniques utilized by tactical operators must still be reasonable based on the amount of resistance encountered and the totality of the known circumstances.

(2) Operator Mindset

Unlike many police operations, during most SWAT operations the tactical officer enters the area to be secured with the knowledge that all persons are to be

unquestionably controlled. There is typically no need to process reasonable suspicion or probable cause, this will have been determined before the team is utilized. The officer needs only to determine the appropriate amount of force to control the situation.

The operator must also bear in mind that he/she is functioning as a member of a team and must work to achieve the team goals and operational objectives. During dynamic movement, the ability to rapidly control a subject has an impact on the ability of other officers to perform their tasks and to quickly and safely execute the operation. The more quickly a suspect can be controlled, the more quickly other officers can assist in other areas with other critical tasks.

(3) Equipment

SWAT operators commonly wear significantly heavier armor and carry significantly more equipment than a typical patrol officer. This additional armor and equipment makes it more difficult for the SWAT operator to move in the same way as an officer that is not encumbered with the equipment. This equipment can make it more difficult to execute some of the more common control techniques and also makes it difficult for the SWAT operator to rapidly get up off of the ground. Much of this equipment also makes it easier for an adversary to grab onto and hold onto the operator.

(4) Operator's Weapons

SWAT operators typically carry at least two firearms. They also commonly carry some form of less-lethal weapon. Additionally, much of the equipment carried by SWAT operators – such as breaching tools – can be used as weapons if controlled by an adversary. This factor alone means that it is critical that a SWAT operator rapidly establish control over a suspect when in physical contact.

- (a) Handling. SWAT operators will conduct CQB operations with a firearm in-hand. This means that it will be common for operators to have a firearm in-hand when going “hands on” with a subject. It is critical that safe and effective weapon handling

techniques are practiced by operators to prevent accidental discharges of the firearm and unintentional injuries. This includes good muzzle discipline, good trigger finger discipline, and proper use of the selector lever. Due to the nature of high risk CQB operations, it is necessary for operators to be capable of rapidly transitioning from the use of a firearm to the use of physical control techniques and then rapidly transitioning back to the use of a firearm. It will not always be possible or prudent to holster or sling a firearm prior to physically controlling a subject.

- (b) Retention. SWAT operators must be capable of weapon retention of both the weapon that they likely have in their hands and any additional weapons they may have secured on their equipment. Just as covered in the BLET SCAT weapon retention techniques material, it should be understood that an attempt to disarm a SWAT operator is a lethal attack and may be overcome using up to, and including, deadly force, if necessary.
- (c) Weapon-In-Hand vs. Weapon Secure. Normally SWAT operators will have a weapon in hand during CQB operations and will be forced to establish physical control of a suspect while maintaining control of a weapon in hand at the same time. This means that one-handed control techniques will often be the first option. It can be very difficult to control an actively resisting or assaultive suspect with one hand.

There will be times that the operator will secure the pistol in the holster or the rifle on a sling so that both hands can be free. This may be when the operator has attempted to control a resisting suspect but is unable to while encumbered with a weapon in hand. The operator may have to disengage briefly to secure the weapon and then re-engage with both hands free in order to establish control. It is important for a SWAT operator to consider the sling system that they utilize on their shoulder fired weapon. For a SWAT operator it is vital that the

sling enable the weapon to be secured in a position that allows the operator to effectively use both hands to control a resisting suspect.

(5) Reaction Time

Use of force factors and variables include reaction time and the availability of other options. Many encounters between SWAT operators and subjects during CQB occur at very close range and with little time to assess and therefore a lack of practical alternatives other than rapid physical control.

(6) Deliberate Movement vs Dynamic Movement

(a) Dynamic Movement. During operations involving dynamic movement it is important that the team overall, and the individual clearing cells in particular, capitalize on the element of surprise and maintain the initiative through proper pacing throughout the target structure. This will mean that operators will commonly move to rapidly establish physical control of subjects within the target structure rather than maintaining a reactionary gap and attempting to gain verbal control. The team member operates in a state of controlled aggression. Speed, surprise, and direct aggressive action all cause a suspect to be less likely to formulate a plan to resist or evade officers. Unlike other police operations, where maintaining a reactionary gap is stressed, the tactical officer must rapidly close with and control the subject. The physical control techniques must capitalize on and maintain these factors.

(b) Deliberate Movement. During deliberate movement CQB, the team will often seek to maintain a tactically advantageous position and establish control of subjects through verbal direction and de-escalation, when appropriate and feasible.

(7) Team Tactics/Clearing Cell Techniques

During room entry, members of the clearing cell have specific areas of responsibility that they must control.

Additionally, the threats within the room must be controlled in sequence according to the level of threat that they present. If a member of the clearing cell encounters a subject at close range, physical control must be established immediately. If the subject is actively resisting or assaulting the operator and the individual operator is unable to establish immediate physical control, then the operator should communicate to the rest of the clearing cell that assistance is needed: "Fight. Need One." It must be understood, however, that the other existing threats within the room and follow-on threats must be covered or otherwise addressed. It may be necessary for the clearing cell to call for additional personnel from outside the room before being able to render immediate assistance to the operator struggling with the suspect.

2. Principles of Control and Arrest

A SWAT operator must be a "subject matter expert" on the use of force. During an operation, an operator may be expected to control an armed and violent suspect as well as that suspect's elderly grandmother – sometimes within the same room and within seconds of each other. The SWAT officer must be able to apply the most effective and reasonable amount of force in order to quickly gain control. This requires an understanding of the principals of control and arrest.

a) Subject Resistance Level

People encountered by team members may react in an unpredictable and therefore potentially dangerous manner. The individual operator's ability to accurately assess these reactions and to swiftly take appropriate action will better enable the operator to control these subjects. Subject resistance may be classified as follows:

(1) Compliance

A subject may immediately follow directions of the team member. This subject must still be monitored for any potential threat and continued compliance.

(2) Passive Non-Compliance ("Freeze")

The subject may not follow directions of team members but may make no active attempt to flee or fight. Often this

reaction is caused by the psychological and physiological stress of the situation. This reaction poses little threat to the operator or the team but the subject must be physically controlled for their own safety and to prevent any interference with the safe execution of the operation.

(3) Active Non-Compliance (“Flight”)

A subject does not follow directions of the team members and takes an overt physical action contrary to direction. This subject may be attempting to escape, or may be attempting to access a weapon. It is vital to the safety of the team and to other unknown subjects in the area that the active non-compliant subject be physically controlled immediately.

(4) Assaultive (“Fight”)

When contacted, the subject assaults the team member. The subject may push, grab, or strike the operator or attempt to take control of the operator’s weapons or equipment. The subject must be physically controlled immediately.

(5) Aggravated Assaultive (“Lethal Threat”)

The subject engages the team by means of deadly force – either individually or in concert with other subjects.

b) Use of Force

(1) Presence

The appearance of an operator or team approaching a subject aggressively has a significant psychological impact. This effect generally makes it less likely that a subject will actively resist. Although the appearance and “militarization” of SWAT teams is often criticized, the numerical superiority, coordinated effort, and professionalism of the team and individual operators often enables the team to establish control over high risk situations with little or no force being used at all – which is the ultimate goal.

(2) Verbal Direction

Team members must clearly and forcefully direct subjects to a position of physical control. It is important that the commands be simple and direct and that multiple team members not give commands simultaneously. When feasible, most commonly during non-hostage barricade incidents, the team will utilize verbal de-escalation techniques from positions of tactical advantage with the goal of establishing control with very little physical force.

(3) Physical Control – “Soft Hands”

In the case of a subject that is compliant or passively non-compliant, Soft Hand techniques may be appropriate. Soft Hand techniques include pushing a subject away or forcing a subject to the floor. Subjects that are positioned in such a way that they may impede the movement of the team must be pushed out of the way.

(4) Physical Control – Stunning Techniques

Specific strikes to specific targets as approved by the NC BLET SCAT lesson plan. These stunning techniques include strikes to the Common Peroneal, Suprascapular, Brachial Plexus, and Femoral motor nerve points. These techniques are designed to facilitate control of an actively resisting suspect.

(5) Physical Control – “Hard Hands” or Combative Strikes

As approved by the NC BLET SCAT lesson plan, subjects that actively assault team members may be controlled through a variety of Hard Hand techniques including punches, kicks, elbow strikes, or knee strikes.

(6) Intermediate Weapons – High Level

Striking a subject with an object would be classified as a High Level use of Intermediate Weapons. This may include a “head butt” while wearing a helmet when defending against an assaultive suspect, or striking a subject with the operator’s primary or secondary weapon system when preventing a disarm attempt.

(7) Deadly Force

Whether firearms, edged weapons, improvised weapons, or empty hands, this level of force is likely to cause serious injury or death.

(8) Other Weapons

SWAT units will commonly have other weapons at their disposal including TASERS, specialty impact munitions (both 12 gauge and 40 mm), and chemical weapons.

3. Physical Techniques

Operators should practice commonly accepted techniques from the BLET Subject Control and Arrest Techniques material and evaluate their application during SWAT operations.

a) Strikes, Kicks, and Pushes

The necessary level of force will determine the amount of impact and the part of the subject's body contacted by the operator. Strikes may be used as a stunning or distracting manner to facilitate another technique such as a takedown, or may be combative in nature when the objective is to stop the aggressive action of an assaultive subject. Typically, a stunning technique is executed against a motor nerve point such as the common peroneal or the supra scapular. A combative technique used against an assaultive subject must simply be reasonable and effective.

- (1) Hand Strikes. Various strikes with the hands may be effective in self-defense or in establishing control. Hand strikes include hammer fist strikes, knuckle punches, palm heel strikes, and knife hand strikes.
- (2) Elbow strikes. Elbow strikes are used in a manner similar to hand strikes. Elbow strikes are typically effective at closer range than hand strikes.
- (3) Kicks. Kicking techniques are any use of the feet towards control of a subject. A kick may be a "hard hands" level of force such as a kick with the toe of the foot into a combative subject's midsection, or may be a "soft hands" level of force such as pushing or holding a subject in a prone position with the sole of the foot. An officer armed with a firearm that must be controlled with both hands will

find that the use of the foot becomes important. A subject that is in a choke point, for example, may be pushed out of the way by an operator's foot so that the officer is able to immediately employ his firearm upon moving through the choke point.

- (4) Knee strike. Knee strikes are similar to kicks but are typically effective at closer ranges. Knee strikes are also effective in facilitating a takedown of a subject that is actively resisting.

b) Straight arm

This technique is executed while the operator is on the move, either towards the subject for control or moving past the subject to engage a higher priority threat. The operator simply extends his support hand and contacts the subject with the palm of the open hand. This technique takes advantage of the momentum of the operator.

c) Close Quarters Control Technique

This technique is physically similar to the Straight Arm but the operator's body weapon is the edge of the forearm. The CQC Technique can be delivered at closer range and can facilitate other controls and takedowns.

d) Takedowns

The ultimate goal of most tactical operations is to establish control over all subjects within the target area. Absent other considerations, the typical control position that most subjects will be directed to take is a prone position with their hands placed on the back of their heads with their fingers interlocked. A passive or active non-compliant subject must be physically taken down to the ground into this position. The arm bar takedown, the rear takedown, and the multiple officer takedown will usually be used against a subject that is resisting to the point that they cannot be taken down with a neck hook and stunning techniques.

- (1) Neck hook. This technique is commonly used during SWAT operations because it is one of the few takedown techniques that can be effectively utilized with one hand. While facing the subject, the operator hooks his hand around the back of the subject's neck, places his hand on

the back of the subject's head, and directs the subject straight down to the ground. This technique can be facilitated by knee strikes if necessary due to active resistance or assaultive behavior by the subject. This is the preferred takedown to use during the initial phase of an operation – particularly during dynamic movement – because it enables the operator to quickly employ the firearm if necessary.

- (2) Arm bar takedown. Typically the arm bar takedowns will require the use of both hands. As such, they will usually be done after slinging or holstering the weapon, and usually done when there is another operator present to provide cover. An arm bar takedown is executed by establishing control of the subject's arm through a "joint lock" at the elbow or shoulder's maximum range of motion, and using that control to direct the subject to the ground.
- (3) Rear takedown. Like the arm bar takedown, the rear takedown requires the use of both hands. The operator establishes control of the subject by wrapping both arms around the subject's waist from behind, and then uses that control to direct the subject to the ground. The operator uses body weight to unbalance the subject and attempts to establish a mounted control position when the subject is taken down.
- (4) Multiple Officer Takedown. When a subject resists and cannot be controlled by a single operator or when the clearing cell is attempting to control a subject suffering from an altered mental status or crisis, then the team may utilize a multiple officer takedown. This will typically require at least two operators that can secure their weapons in order to use both hands and will require at least a third operator to provide lethal cover. The operators will establish control over the subject's limbs and direct the subject to the ground for additional control and handcuffing.

M. Tactical Emergency Casualty Care during CQB

Trauma care of team members, victims, and suspects is the responsibility of the SWAT team as long as the target area is unsecure. Trauma care by the team will continue once the target area is secure and until relieved by personnel with higher levels of medical training are able to respond. Tactical Emergency Casualty Care

is the deliberate combination of good medical practice with good tactics and is intended to avoid preventable deaths.

The three primary causes of preventable death from gunshot wounds and other traumatic injury related to tactical operations are massive hemorrhage, tension pneumothorax, and airway obstruction. SWAT team training should include TECC and equipment should include individual first aid kits (IFAKs) that contain equipment to address the primary causes of preventable death: tourniquets, gauze, occlusive dressings (chest seals), and nasopharyngeal airways (NPAs). The use of this equipment exceeds the scope of this lesson plan, but the following brief discussion explains how TECC should be executed during a CQB operation.

1. Care Under Fire

During the Care Under Fire phase, the risk of additional injuries is still very high. The suspect that fired the rounds or otherwise caused the injury is still unsecured and there is still an ongoing threat. This may be when a team member is injured while the team is approaching a target structure across open ground or when a clearing cell is entering a room or maneuvering through a hallway. Initially, the priority is to suppress or to eliminate the threat. Doing so will reduce the potential for additional injuries to the wounded officer and to additional officers. The injured officer should return fire if possible, should move to cover if possible, and should render aid to themselves if possible, while other members of the team or clearing cell addresses the tactical situation. During the Care Under Fire phase, massive hemorrhage is the primary cause of preventable death that should be addressed. This might include the application of a tourniquet and/or direct pressure to a wound.

2. Tactical Field Care

During the Tactical Field Care phase, the risk of additional injuries is high but the casualty has been moved to a covered location or the specific suspect that caused the injury has been suppressed or eliminated. The team is still operating within the “hot zone” and the target area is unsecured. This may be when an injured team member has been moved from open ground to a covered position behind a vehicle or tree, or may be when a clearing cell has established control over the room that contains the casualty but not the entire structure. Initially, the priority is to establish security around the casualty to prevent further injuries. The casualty should be reported out to the team leader, TOC, or incident commander so arrangements for advanced medical care can be initiated. Then a team member may begin to assist the casualty with trauma care. This will include addressing obvious life threatening hemorrhage, an airway assessment, an assessment for any trauma to the torso that might

impact respirations, a head to toe assessment for additional wounds, and overall management of shock, hypothermia, and hypovolemia. This phase is also when any mission critical equipment that is carried by the casualty is collected and distributed to members of the team that will remain operationally focused. If, for any reason, the casualty appears to be suffering from an altered mental status, the casualty's weapons should be taken from them.

3. Tactical Evacuation Care

The team should devise a plan to evacuate the casualty from the unsecured area, or "hot zone", to the closest point that can be reached by advanced emergency medical support. This plan will include the method of moving the casualty. It is extremely difficult to move a casualty that is loaded with tactical equipment through a structure. It will likely require at least two operators just to move the casualty plus at least one or two to provide security depending on the tactical situation. Once outside the structure, the casualty may need to be loaded into a team deployment vehicle and transported away from the target location. This may be just to the end of the street where EMS is waiting, or may be miles away to the nearest trauma center. This task element of operators has significantly depleted the personnel resources available to the team still operating at the target location. Depending on the tactical situation, it may be better to push through to secure the target location and bring EMS in once the area is safe.

III. Conclusion

A. Summary

This block of instruction focused on the various techniques to enter, clear and search buildings. We discussed the differences between a deliberate clear and dynamic entry techniques, and when they are most effectively utilized. We also detailed techniques and procedures that the team should use when cornering, maneuvering from room to room, through hallways, and on stairs. Gaining entry using mechanical breaching devices was also discussed and outlined. Issues such as use of control and arrest techniques and Tactical Emergency Casualty Care were addressed. Lastly, we discussed some common terminology used in tactical operations and tactical principles that should be applied during SWAT operations whenever possible.

1. Correctly describe various tactical principles and explain how they apply to SWAT team building search tactics.

2. Properly define listed terminology that is related to SWAT team building search tactics.
3. Correctly describe and demonstrate proper weapon handling techniques during CQB and describe how the techniques promote both safety and effectiveness during CQB operations.
4. Properly demonstrate verbal and non-verbal communications techniques during CQB operations.
5. Correctly list and describe the six phases of execution of a CQB operation.
6. Properly describe the actions taken during the Contain phase of execution including the containment perimeter and the isolation perimeter.
7. Properly describe considerations during the Approach phase of execution including the use of a deployment vehicle, multiple small vehicles, and while on foot.
8. Properly describe and demonstrate individual actions during the Breach phase of execution including positioning of personnel, methods of entry, and contingency planning.
9. Accurately describe and demonstrate actions during the Enter, Search, Secure, and Clear phase of execution including cornering, room entry, and hallway movement during both Deliberate Movement and Dynamic Movement.
10. Correctly describe considerations during the Actions on Objective phase of execution including prisoner control, interior security, and exterior security tasks.
11. Correctly describe considerations during the Withdraw phase of execution including preparing to withdraw, maintaining security, and accounting for personnel and equipment.
12. Correctly describe considerations for the use of control and arrest techniques during CQB operations including legal issues, use of force concepts related to CQB, and commonly used physical techniques.
13. Accurately describe how Tactical Emergency Casualty Care should be conducted during CQB operations including during the Care Under Fire, Tactical Field Care, and Tactical Evacuation Care phases of TECC.

14. During a practical exercise, demonstrate the ability to safely enter, search, and clear a structure using tactics, techniques, and procedures discussed during class.

B. Questions from Class

C. Closing Statement

SWAT operations involve a wide variety of common skills and mission profiles. Many of these operations will involve securing structures. The team must be highly proficient at the fundamental tactics, techniques, and procedures related to CQB. The only way that your team will become proficient with these skills is to practice, practice, and practice. You will need to enter and search a variety of structures utilizing the deliberate and dynamic methods. Learning how your fellow team members will move and react to different situations will only increase your skill and ability to survive during real confrontations.

NOTES

¹ Hansen, 12.

² Merriam-Webster, “tactics”, 2020.

³ Merriam-Webster, “principles”, 2020.

⁴ US Army, 2019 page 3-2.

⁵ Hancock, 14 – 15.

⁶ CQB-Team.com, “Crossover/Crisscross”, para 1

⁸ Dictionary.com, “Deconflict”.

⁹ SOFREP, para 1.

¹⁰ Hancock, 13.

¹¹ Hancock, 22 – 25.

¹⁵ Hancock, 6 – 10.

¹⁶ Wikipedia, “Close Quarters Battle,” para 1.

¹⁷ Earnhardt, 2 – 11.

¹⁸ Blackwater Lodge and Training Center, 1 – 19.

¹⁹ Holm, 133-141.

²⁰ Hansen, 12.

²¹ Rector, 104.

TITLE:	Introduction to Distraction Devices
Lesson Purpose:	The purpose of this lesson plan is to introduce the student to basic components and deployment considerations of distraction devices.
Training Objectives:	At the end of this block of instruction, the student will be able to achieve the following objectives in accordance with the information received during the instructional period: 1. Accurately describe the history and general information related to distraction devices including design, multi-bangs, improvements and developments. 2. Correctly define and describe important terms related to distraction devices including fuze, deflagration, blast pressure, and fragmentation. 3. Correctly identify and describe the three main components of a distraction device. 4. Correctly describe the physiological and psychological effects of a distraction device when deployed. 5. Accurately describe the three primary methods of deployment for distraction devices and some common hazards associated with their deployment. 6. Correctly describe considerations related to render safe procedures for distraction devices. 7. Correctly describe various carry options for distraction devices. 8. Accurately describe several advantages and disadvantages of deploying distraction devices. 9. Accurately describe the considerations related to storage and transportation of distraction devices. 10. Correctly identify legal issues related to the use of distraction devices including key court decisions, general recommendations from case law, and preparing for court testimony.

11. In a practical setting, safely demonstrate the learned procedures for deploying a distraction device.

Hours: Four (4) Hours

Instructional Method: Lecture/Discussion
Practical Exercises

Testing Requirements: Pre-Test and Post Test

Training Environment: Classroom
Practical Exercise Area that Accommodates NFDDs

Materials Required: Pen/Paper/Pencil
Eye and Ear Protection
Duty Gloves

Training Aids: Computer with AV Projector
PowerPoint Presentation
Whiteboard and Markers
Inert NFDDs and Components
Functional Training NFDDs
Functional Operational NFDDs

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TITLE: Introduction to Distraction Devices

I. Introduction

A. Opening Statement

Distraction devices are a viable tool for providing tactical teams with advantages during tactical entries by causing physiological and/or psychological distractions. These devices, when deployed properly, have proven to be one of the most effective operational tools available to law enforcement and military personnel internationally. A physiological diversion from the distraction device impacts directly on the suspect by affecting one or more of the five human senses.¹

B. Training Objectives

1. Accurately describe the history and general information related to distraction devices including design, multi-bangs, improvements and developments.
2. Correctly define and describe important terms related to distraction devices including fuze, deflagration, blast pressure, and fragmentation.
3. Correctly identify and describe the three main components of a distraction device.
4. Correctly describe the physiological and psychological effects of a distraction device when deployed.
5. Accurately describe the three primary methods of deployment for distraction devices and some common hazards associated with their deployment.
6. Correctly describe considerations related to render safe procedures for distraction devices.
7. Correctly describe various carry options for distraction devices.
8. Accurately describe several advantages and disadvantages of deploying distraction devices.
9. Accurately describe the considerations related to storage and transportation of distraction devices.
10. Correctly discuss legal issues related to the use of distraction devices including several key court decisions, general recommendations from case law, and preparing for court testimony.

11. In a practical setting, safely demonstrate the learned procedures for deploying a distraction device.

C. Reasons

The goal of this lesson is to provide the SWAT operator with a basic working knowledge of distraction devices. Since there are several manufacturers of these devices, it is not possible to provide detailed instruction on all of them. This lesson plan is designed to provide a basic understanding; however, neither this lesson plan nor this training represents the final, definitive answer to these devices. Once an agency decides to purchase distraction devices for their respective teams, the agency must request specific training on that device from the manufacturer of that product and proper recommended deployment. Also, each agency and officer needs to understand legal concerns for the implementation of these devices as it applies to a citizen's Fourth Amendment rights regarding use of force.

II. Body

A. History and Overview of Distraction Devices

1. History

Distraction devices were introduced by the British SAS and Germany's GSG9. Sometime around 1980. Both of those units were the military counter-terrorism units for each country. The United States law enforcement tactical teams began to take notice of the advantages of the devices during high-risk operations.²

Today, numerous companies produce various types and models of distraction devices. Some are for military use only while others are targeted to the law enforcement market where liability issues are at their greatest. In this lesson plan, we will discuss the two major manufactures commonly used by law enforcement; Defense Technologies (Def-Tech) by Safariland and CTS (Combined Tactical Solutions).

Defense Technologies refer to their product as a Distraction Device while CTS refers to their product as a Flash Bang. Whichever product your agency uses, it is best practice to use the appropriate name or terminology. For the purpose of this lesson plan, we will use either term interchangeably.

2. Overview

- a) A distraction device is a non-bursting canister containing a low explosive designed to produce light, sound, and blast pressure.
 - 1) Heat from a Flash Bang can exceed 3000 degrees Fahrenheit. This heat is rapidly released through deflagration and is contained within a cardboard or aluminum tube. When this tube ruptures, it creates a mechanical explosion, which creates a pressure wave. This is typically an overpressure of 0.85 PSI at 6 feet.
 - 2) The Flash Bang can produce 6-8 million candelas of light.
 - 3) Produces 174.5 decibel at 5 feet. 185 decibels can cause ear damage. All decibel ratings are measured at 5 feet.
- b) Multi detonation distraction devices in which a single distraction device can have several continuous detonations are common now. they can detonate from two to up to nine times, continuously, to allow for a prolonged distraction or diversion.
 - 1) CTS manufactures a 7290-2 “double bang”, a “6 bang” the 7290-6, and a 9 “bang” the 7290-9 devices. The deployment is the same as the traditional single detonation device, the 7290 model.
 - 2) Detonation intervals with multiple charge devices is not consistent.
- c) Other improvements and advancements in design have increased the practicality of and training with these devices.
 - 1) Def-Tech produces a Low Roll model in which the design of the body has flat sides, helping to prevent unintentional rolling of the device upon deployment.
 - 2) Distraction devices have become more compact as CTS also manufactures a “mini” bang, the 7290M. It is smaller and lighter than it’s big brother the standard 7290. They have also developed the 7290ML which is a lighter weight version of the mini bang. While Def-Tech produces the Low Roll II.
 - 3) Def-Tech also produces reloadable bodies in which the charge and fuze are replaced. The operator has the option to choose from various charge weights to increase effectiveness. The standard weight is 4 grams of explosive compound but a 12 gram version is available.

- 4) Both manufactures have training version of their respective product. In each case, the device is reloadable, the body is blue and the threads to the reloadable fuzes are reversed to prevent confusion with actual fuzes and/or charges.

B. Important Terms and Definitions

The following terms and definitions generally apply to describe or explain most manufactured distraction devices.

1. Fuze vs. Fuse³

a) Fuze

A fuze is a mechanical type initiator. Typically a spring drives a striker which detonates an explosive primer – similar to how a firearm cartridge functions. The primer ignites a delay composition which in turn ignites the ignition material. The ignition material ignites the main explosive charge (in a hand grenade) or the flash powder (in a NFDD). The M201A1 fuze is the most common fuze used in distraction devices. The delay composition is designed to produce a delay of approximately 1.5 seconds.

b) Fuse

A fuse is a pyrotechnic type initiator. Basically, it burns and triggers the mixture in the canister to ignite. This is the typical fuse that is lit with a mechanical igniter or match – such as the fuse on a firecracker.

2. Deflagration vs Detonation

a) Deflagration

Rapid burning that travels at subsonic speed through a fuel source is deflagration. Deflagration will not make a “bang” unless it is contained. Flash powder used in NFDDs deflagrates rather than detonates. During deflagration in a NFDD, the solid fuel source (flash powder) changes to gas and bursts the cardboard or aluminum container inside the device body which creates the “bang”. This is just as with a firecracker – although the amount of fuel in a NFDD is much larger than in a firecracker.

b) Detonation

A very rapid, almost instantaneous, chemical reaction based on supersonic heat and shock waves that travel through a material is detonation. Detonation will create a “bang” without being contained due to its rapid expansion. Military hand grenades contain high explosives that detonate rather than deflagrate.

3. Blast Pressure and Overpressure

Both deflagration and detonation create blast pressure. The blast pressure occurs as the result of the rapid displacement of atmosphere around an explosion. Overpressure is the sudden increase of atmospheric pressure created by the compression of air caused by the blast pressure wave.

Overpressure is measured in pounds per square inch (psi). Normal atmospheric pressure is 14 psi at sea level. The overpressure is at its greatest at the seat of the explosion. Pressure decreases rapidly as the pressure wave moves away from the explosion in all directions. The blast pressure produces a positive and negative wave. The positive wave is formed at the instant of the explosion and moves away from the explosion site. The negative wave is the returning pressure wave to fill the vacuum created by the positive wave, similar to a sucking effect.

4. Sympathetic Detonation

This refers to the occurrence of a second charge exploding as the result of being in the vicinity of an initial explosion. Explosives are subject to detonation through a variety of stimuli including friction, impact, heat, electrostatic discharge, shock, and others. If a NFDD functions in close proximity of another NFDD, it can cause a sympathetic detonation (or, more accurately, deflagration) of the device.

5. Reflected Pressure⁶

This refers to the action of a blast pressure wave bouncing off of a surface. Reflected pressure can create an increased overpressure due to multiple blast fronts overlapping.

6. Reaction Time

Reaction time is described as the interval between when an organism is stimulated and when it responds.¹⁰ Human reaction time can be very fast when a single action is intended – such as pulling a trigger as soon as a target is presented. Human reaction time to visual stimulus can be as short as .25 seconds. Flash Bangs or Distraction Devices can increase time it takes to execute a pre-planned action due to the fact that they create a startle response that may trigger an emotional response which interferes with the ability to focus on an objective action.

7. Fragmentation¹¹

The primary effect of an explosion is the blast pressure. This blast pressure can cause fragmentation. Fragmentation can occur in typically two ways.

- a) Material from the device itself. Referred to as “primary fragmentation.” NFDDs, are designed not to produce any primary fragmentation. This is unlike a military hand grenade which is specifically designed to produce primary fragmentation of the grenade body.
- b) From debris from around the explosion site. Also referred to as “secondary fragmentation.”

C. Distraction Device Components

1. Fuze M201A1 or CTS M201¹⁹

These fuzes produce a delay of approximately 1.5 seconds from when the primer is initiated. The fuze itself consists of the striker, primer, ignition mixture, safety lever (spoon), and pull pin. In addition to these common components, the CTS M201 has a safety clip and shroud.

2. Explosive compound (charge)

The explosive compound is actually flash powder packed inside a cardboard or aluminum tube.

3. Body (Canister)

The body is designed not to fragment and is designed to contain any fragments from the cardboard or aluminum tube that ruptures when the flash powder deflagrates. The body is also vented with various ports to enable blast pressure, heat, noise, and light to escape from the body.

D. Effects of Distraction Devices^{20, 21}

Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary defines distraction as, *to draw or direct (as one’s attention) to a different object or in different directions at the same time.*²²

Distraction devices produce light, sound, and overpressure. The effects of these stimuli are divided into two categories, physiological and psychological.

1. Physiological Distractions - Physical

The stimuli of light, sound, and overpressure are all individually capable of eliciting a startle-flinch response in humans. The three stimuli together

promote a reliable startle-flinch response. This response is a subconscious protective reaction that triggers various physiological actions throughout the body.

a) Visual effects

When the device functions there is an immediate flash of light. The devices generally produce 6-8 million candela of light. The sudden exposure to light causes the retina to bleach and constrict creating temporary dark spots in the field of vision. Studies have shown that it may take a normal person's eyes anywhere from 10 to 30 minutes to restore normal vision. This is the same effect that is created by looking at a bright light. It causes the eye to instinctively blink or close for protection.

b) Auditory

Loud sound - At a distance of 5 feet, the sound produced can reach a decibel rating of 174.5 dB. Compare that to the sound of a .308 caliber rifle sound at the muzzle which is 160 dB. Exposure to this loud noise causes the sympathetic nervous system to initiate protective measures in the ear itself and also initiates the startle-flinch response in the entire body.

c) Reactions to the blast pressure wave

Upon functioning of the device, a blast pressure wave is created. The shock-front of the pressure wave pushes the air out rapidly, increasing atmospheric pressure (overpressure). This sudden overpressure is felt on the skin and within the ears and lungs which triggers the startle-flinch response.

During a single training session, it is recommended that team members not be directly exposed to more than 8 device detonations.²³

2. Psychological Distractions

It is the psychological reaction to the startle-flinch response that creates the desired delay in reaction time. A startle-flinch response is initiated in less than a second and takes a mere second or two to recover from. When the startle-flinch response triggers a negative psychological effect – or emotional effect – this is what typically results in the actual distraction and delay in reaction. The startle-flinch response that is created by an unanticipated, unknown, or unfamiliar stimulus will trigger fear, anxiety, or panic.

This fear, anxiety, or panic in turn shifts the primary function of the brain away from logical thought and towards the primal survival function. This essentially prevents the human from clear logical thought for several seconds. May cause confusion, hesitation, temporary loss of control of certain bodily functions. This results in the actual delayed reaction that is the desired effect of using the device.

SWAT operators that are using the NFDD will suffer the same startle-flinch effects that any human will but they will not suffer the same psychological effects because they are anticipating functioning of the device and are familiar with the effects.

E. Deployment Methods

“The best way to avoid contact injuries is to deploy the device with a concept known as *sighted delivery*. This is one of the most misinterpreted terms involving the deployment of the diversionary device. This does not mean you sight deliver them when you can or when it is convenient. The term applies to EVERY deployment of a flash / sound diversionary device, unless exigent circumstances exist. The courts have been unambiguous about this term and it must be applied in every situation.”²⁵ Sighted delivery simply means, you must see where you are going to place the device to ensure there are no hazards or persons present that could result in injury. In training, there is no danger of a suspect shooting at you as you look into the room for an area to deploy the device. Therefore, sighted delivery is clearly demonstrated. However, when the mission is real, the operator obviously feels the danger of looking into a room and the sighted delivery may become more of a “step and toss.”²⁶

1. Hand Deployment

The most common deployment is where the operator holds the device in hand, prepares the device, and deploys it into a visible target area. In any hand deployment, at the very least, the operator should be wearing some type of flame resistant or protective gloves along with eye protection. Also, consider using hearing protection and some type of flame resistant head and face protection.²⁷

a) Prepping the device^{28 29}

- (1) Remove from carrier. We will discuss types of carriers and placement later.
- (2) For right handed deployment, place the device upright in the hand. This allows for the spoon to be in the web of the hand with the pull ring facing the operator. Left-handed deployment may require the device to be held upside down. This still allows for the spoon to be in the web of the hand

and the pull ring to face the operator. (The tactical conditions, and not the operator's primary hand, will determine which hand to use for deployment and operators should be proficient at deployment with either hand.)

- (3) Grip the device firmly **with the spoon in the web of the hand**. This will prevent accidental release of the spoon if the operator "milks" the grip.
- (4) Adjust or prep pins on pull ring and pull pin. CTS utilizes a safety clip that ensures the pin stays in place until twisted from the clip. Also, CTS utilizes a shroud around the end of the pin thus removing the need to prep the pin. Def-Tech pins are bent outward to prevent accidental pulling and must be straightened to aid in pulling the pin.
- (5) Device is ready to deploy.

b) Deployment

Once the device is prepped, the operator is now ready to deploy the device. This procedure is based on the "sighted delivery" method as described before. Never toss or throw the device in a structure blindly unless you can articulate exigent circumstances. Again, sighted delivery simply means you look first into the room for an area to deploy or place device.

When possible, the operator should **look** to clear the area of deployment, *then* **pull** the pin and **deploy** the device. This sequence will prevent the issue of pulling the pin, then looking only to determine that the device cannot be safely deployed.

- (1) **Never grab for or play with a device.**

NOTE: Show Slide: "Never Grab for..."

- (2) **Never kick a device.**

NOTE: Show slide, "Move."

c) "No Bang" Situations³⁰

In cases where once the operator looks into the intended target area and sees a hazard or possible risk of injury to someone inside, then a "bang out" deployment is used if the pin has already been pulled.

- (1) **NEVER RE-PIN A DEVICE!**

- (2) Typically, in this case, the device is deployed outside while the team is still stacked at the initial entry point. The operator should yell “BANG OUT” to let all other team members know that you are deploying the device outside. Depending on the tactical situation, this information may also be relayed on the radio.
- (3) Toss or throw the device in a safe area away from hazards or other people. In an outside environment, it is ok to toss or throw the device as long as you know where you are throwing it.
- (4) In an interior environment, the operator must select a suitable location to deploy the device. This may be in the room, hallway, or other space that the team currently occupies.

2. Command Initiated³¹

Command initiated devices have a special fuze in which “thermo tubing” is utilized to detonate the device at a distance. The operator must also use a special initiator which typically uses a standard 209 shotgun primer to set the charge off.

3. Mechanical deployment³²

- a) Bang or flash poles may be used to place a device in a specific location. They may be used at doors but should nearly always be used at windows.
 - (1) Use discretion when breaking through windows. The device at the end of the pole and the area immediately around the device must be visible in order to be considered sighted delivery.
 - (2) Glass may become fragmentation which will likely come back in the direction of the operator – safety equipment is recommended. Consider using a face shield.
 - (3) Can cause curtain to catch fire.
- b) Distraction ammunition is also manufactured for 12-gauge shotguns. This ammunition creates a muzzle blast effect similar to the effect of the hand delivered device. This ammunition has its own set of advantages and disadvantages which exceed the scope of this lesson plan.

4. Hazards³³

- a) Glass and windows can break due to overpressure. This typically effects the team rather than the occupants of the location. The team and all other officers present should wear proper protective equipment.
- b) Explosive materials or combustible chemicals present. Attempt to confirm or deny during operational planning cycle. Include this scenario in training.
- c) Flammable materials (furniture, carpet, curtains). Practice sighted delivery and always have a fire extinguisher.
- d) Hostages or innocent persons present. Practice sighted delivery and use only when reasonable and necessary.

5. Handling and Deployment Prohibitions³⁴

- a) Change hands with device that has pin pulled. This dramatically increases the risk of injury due to accidentally losing control of the spoon.
- b) Improperly use. Ensure that a risk assessment or articulable facts on the ground supports the use of the device – it may be considered a use of force.
- c) Improperly deploy. Practice sighted delivery by trained and certified personnel.
- d) Improperly carry. Carry devices with all safeties intact and in proper carry pouches to prevent unintentional function of device while carried or when removed from carrier.
- e) Reinsert the pin. Once a device has the pin pulled, the device should be deployed into a safe area and allowed to function.
- f) Use outdated munitions in a real world incident. This will increase the possibility of a dud or a partial function of the device. Purchase devices based on anticipated needs for training and operations. Only use outdated munitions during training.
- g) Improperly prepare device. Removing safeties prematurely or constantly bending pull pins will increase the possibility of unintentional functioning of device and injury.

- h) Improperly store the device. Devices should be secured and only accessible to trained and certified operators. Storage should be in compliance with ATF standards.

F. Render Safe Methods^{35 36}

Rendering safe a distraction device that failed to detonate can be a dangerous situation. There are typically two reasons why a device failed to detonate. The first is some type of mechanical failure with the device itself. The second reason is operator error. Operator error can simply be a failure to pull the pin or that the placement of the device has situated it in a manner that it is against something preventing the spoon from being fully released.

1. Inspect the device from a safe distance while wearing all safety equipment to determine the issue.
2. If it is determined that a mechanical issue has caused the failure, i.e. the spoon failed to release fully, then use a long handled tool and move the device to see if the spoon releases.
3. If the issue appears to be a hang fire, in which the striker fails to go fully forward, CTS recommends waiting thirty (30) minutes before attempting to use a long handled instrument to send the striker forward. Once the striker goes forward, turn away and wait for the device to go off. If it still fails to go off, wait another thirty (30) minutes before retrieving the device (do not use hands) and place in a safe container for transport.
3. If the user failed to pull the pin and it appears in new, unused condition then the device is safe to handle with no other precautions needed.
4. If none of the above mentioned situations seem to be the reason for failure, then you must do the following:
 - a) Again, inspect from a safe distance wearing all safety equipment.
 - b) Def-Tech recommends that you detonate in place by using another distraction device with a command detonator to set the charge off. This is done by placing a new device with the large port hole at the bottom against the failed device's large port hole. Basically bottom to bottom. (This could be accomplished with a mechanical bang pole, as well.)
 - c) CTS recommends that you use a long handled tool, such as a shovel and pick the device up.
 - d) Place the device in a bucket of water and let it soak for a minimum of thirty (30) minutes.

- e) The explosive charged is typically contained in a cardboard tube (LE version) and you should see some of the explosive charge disintegrated as the cardboard tubes comes apart.
 - f) CTS offers a “Military” or “Maritime” version in which the charge is contained in an aluminum tube. Soaking in water will have no effect. Multibangs are water proof as well.
 - g) CTS also recommends that the device can be shot by a high velocity round to penetrate the body and set the charge off. It must be a rifle round as a handgun round will most likely not penetrate the body.
5. No matter the manufacturer, the team must familiarize itself with the specific render safe procedures for that device. It is recommended that teams carry some type of container that will allow them to safely transport a failed device to safer environment in order to better deal with the situation. This can be something as simple as a bucket with sand in it.

G. Carry Options

Carry options will vary from agency to agency due to policies and practices. There are some things to consider when carrying these devices on your body. In general, the operator must weigh the risks and the rewards for a given tactical situation.

1. Carry in a pouch that is designed to carry the device. It is recommended that the device be placed in the pouch with the pull pin against the body. This keeps the pull pin ring from being exposed which , minimizes the chances that it gets accidentally caught or hung up on something and unintentionally functions while in the pouch.
2. The preferred place to carry is in a pouch on the leg. This keeps the device in a position that will minimize or prevent injury if the it functions while in the pouch.
3. Some officers carry devices on the front of their ballistic vest. The issue with this is the device can accidentally detonate from the pull pin getting caught or the device gets shot. In either instance, the explosion is focused through the port holes, typically at the top and bottom of the device, up into the face and potentially down into the upper leg if the operator is kneeling or seated. Neither manufacturer suggests this method.
4. Some devices are carried on the back. If carried on the back, carry low to help minimize injury to the head from accidental activation.

H. Advantages and Disadvantages of Distraction Devices^{37 38}

1. Advantages

a) Increased reaction time of adversary

The increased reaction time of the adversary can create a window of opportunity for SWAT operators to exploit when cornering or entering a room that is potentially occupied by an armed and dangerous suspect. This window of opportunity will typically be between 6 and 8 seconds. This can enable the team to establish numeric or firepower superiority and physical control before the adversary is able to take effective action to harm others or resist control.

b) High percentage of effectiveness against dogs

NFDDs are typically effective against dogs. Dogs that may initially appear to be aggressive will typically run and hide once exposed to the effects of a device. This dramatically reduces the likelihood that an operator will determine that it is necessary to shoot a dog.

2. Disadvantages

a) Can cause a fire or burns to property and to people. A device that functions in very close proximity to a person can cause serious, potentially lethal, blast injuries. **Practice sighted delivery and always have a fire extinguisher!**

b) Emits a degree of smoke and debris. Can make visibility difficult – especially in low light conditions. Ventilation is recommended after employment.

c) Subject may not be able to immediately comply due to being overwhelmed.

d) Can cause any substance in the area to become airborne and therefore more easily inhaled. This has caused injuries to operators when fentanyl was present during narcotics operations.

e) Classified as a Class C explosive must be properly stored and transported in accordance with ATF regulations. This requires proper investment in storage and transportation containers.

- f) Device is sensitive to conditions. Manufacturer warranty is typically 5 years under environmentally controlled conditions. Requires proper storage and rotation of stock.
- g) Can fail to detonate. Must have a “dud plan” for operations and for rendering the dud device safe.
- h) Requires understanding and training of operators. It is important to conduct regular, documented training and to certify operators with use of the device according to manufacturer’s guidelines.
- i) **Severe injury or death if improperly used.** Citizens have been injured by improper use and one experienced NC SWAT officer has killed himself through improper handling.

I. Storage and Transportation⁵³

Flash bangs/distraction devices are considered an explosive device and are regulated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (BATFE) and the transportation is also regulated by the US Department of Transportation (DOT).

1. A Type 2 Magazine suitable for the storage of up to fifty (50) pounds Of explosive material. Typically, for a patrol vehicle, the maximum number of flash bangs that can be stored and transported is two (2). **ATF Rul. 2012-4, 18 U.S.C. 842 (j)**
2. Always check with local, state, and Federal regulations for changes and updates.
3. Larger vehicles such as pickup trucks, even with some type of camper top, can transport more devices in a Type 2 magazine designed to handle a larger amount of explosive material. The key points to remember are that it is a more open area and it is not within a passenger area.
4. Devices should be inventoried monthly and also be stored in an approved Type 2 magazine even at the agency.
 - a) When obtained (5 year expiration)
 - b) When and how used (training, mission, demonstration, etc.)
 - c) Issued to and who deployed

J. Legal Issues

One of the most highly litigated areas for law enforcement is the use of distraction devices. Expect the deploying officer, team members, supervisors, agency and

even the respective government entity to face civil litigation and possibly criminal litigation as well. Injuries and/or property damage need not be present to determine if a violation has occurred.

1. Langford v. Gates CA. Supreme Court 1987
 - a) First documented case in U.S. challenging the use of such devices.
 - b) Plaintiff complained that the use violated 4th, 5th, 9th, and 14th Amendment Rights due to excessive force.
 - c) Court ruled that the use was justified due to lengthy planning and training by LAPD
 - d) Court noted that the deploying officer “looked” before throwing the device. This established the “look before deploying” practice.
2. Boyd v. Benton County 1997
 - a) Boyd was not the subject of the investigation of armed robbery and was merely present in the suspect house along with several other people.
 - b) Boyd was asleep on the floor in the suspect house during the time of the SWAT team raid.
 - c) Officer blindly and without warning threw the device into the residence. The device landed near Boyd and detonated, causing severe burns and injury to her forearm.
 - d) Boyd contends that use of device was excessive force and violated 4th Amendment Right.
 - e) Every officer involved was considered to have “integral participation” and could be held responsible.
 - (1) Every officer knew a device would be deployed.
 - (2) No officer objected to the use of the device.
 - f) A “blind” deployment was a 4th Amendment violation barring exigent circumstances.
3. Garcia v. Texas 1992⁵⁴
 - a) Garcia’s house was a target of High Risk Search Warrant Service by SWAT during which a NFDD was used.

- b) After the location was secured, Garcia was advised of his rights and asked about controlled substances in the house. Garcia told officers about controlled substances and physically showed them where the controlled substances were concealed.
 - c) At trial, Garcia argued that his confession and statements were not voluntarily given because he was suffering the effects of the NFDD – essentially the use of the device coerced his statements. Garcia argued that he did not fully recover from the NFDD until 45 to 50 minutes after the device was used. (Garcia also argued that the NFDD caused his girlfriend to suffer a miscarriage four days after the incident.)
 - d) The appellate court denied the appeal BUT a dissenting opinion stated that, “the devastating effects of the stun grenade under the circumstances presented in this case constituted an inherently coercive environment which prevented appellant from effectuating a free and voluntary waiver of his constitutional rights.”
4. *Dukes v. Deaton* 2017⁵⁵
- a) Dukes was sleeping in bed when the apartment she occupied was breached by a SWAT unit executing a High Risk Search Warrant. A bedroom window was ported and a NFDD was thrown through the window and landed in the bed with Dukes and the suspect listed on the warrant. Dukes suffered severe burns on both thighs and her right arm.
 - b) Dukes claimed that Deaton, the SWAT officer that deployed the NFDD, used excessive force.
 - c) The court agreed that Deaton used excessive force by failing to visually clear the area that the NFDD was deployed into prior to deploying it. (Sighted Delivery!)
 - d) The court granted qualified and official immunity, however, because they found that the violation was not clearly established and that Deaton had not acted with malice or intent to injure.
5. Other warnings and considerations from case law.
- a) Use of flash bangs with the presence of children or innocent third party. Team should use written risk assessment that identifies possible presence of children or third parties. Team should be prepared to articulate need for use in spite of the presence of children or third parties.

- b) Excessive use or unnecessary use of devices. Team should be prepared to articulate specific need for use of device in each incidence. Do not simply state that, “We use NFDDs on raids.” Do not simply state that, “We bang every room during CQB.”
- c) No fire extinguishers present. Have a fire extinguisher whenever the team might deploy pyrotechnic devices – even those that are designed to be “fire safe”.
- d) Blind deployment without exigent circumstances. As a rule, always practice sighted delivery.
- e) Failure to train. These devices are potentially lethal. Ensure that a manufacturer-certified operator conducts regular training with the team. The training should include legal issues, policy and procedure review, and practical exercises that require decision making. This training should be documented.
- f) Deliberate indifference. Which is conscious or reckless disregard of the consequences of one’s action or omission. This can affect the individual operator and the entire chain of command.
- g) Injury or Death. These devices can cause serious injury or death. Treat them with respect, use them only when reasonable and necessary, and follow all manufacturer recommendations and industry best practices.

6. Court Presentation⁵⁶

If called upon to testify in court, it is best practice to do the following:

- a) Know your agency’s use of force policy and policy related to NFDDs. Know your unit’s SOPs/SOGs as they relate to NFDDs.
- b) Know your device. The attorney will! Be able to describe the nomenclature and function of the device. Also be able to describe the effects and hazards of the device.
- c) Study the case prior to testimony. In particular, be prepared to articulate the factors that made the specific use of the device reasonable and necessary.
- d) Read **ALL** reports related to the incident and anticipate any questions or issues.

- e) Be prepared to defend and/or explain your actions to lay persons (Jurors). You may need to explain why the use of the device made officers and victims safer.

K. Practical Exercises

During the course of this block of instruction, you will be exposed to flash bangs and will demonstrate the proper handling and deployment of these devices in a practical setting.

III. Conclusion

A. Summary

We have discussed basic information and deployment procedures for distraction devices. It is important to understand that the distraction device is a tool to provide a SWAT Team with a certain advantage over an offender in certain conditions. These devices require specific training and special handling considerations in accordance with manufacturer recommendations and guidelines as well as departmental policies. Officers must carefully consider the legal consequences for the deployment of distraction devices in each situation.

1. Accurately describe the history and general information related to distraction devices including design, multi-bangs, improvements and developments.
2. Correctly define and describe important terms related to distraction devices including fuze, deflagration, blast pressure, and fragmentation.
3. Correctly identify and describe the three main components of a distraction device.
4. Correctly describe the physiological and psychological effects of a distraction device when deployed.
5. Accurately describe the three primary methods of deployment for distraction devices and some common hazards associated with their deployment.
6. Correctly describe considerations related to render safe procedures for distraction devices.
7. Correctly describe various carry options for distraction devices.
8. Accurately describe several advantages and disadvantages of deploying distraction devices.

9. Accurately describe the considerations related to storage and transportation of distraction devices.
 10. Correctly discuss legal issues related to the use of distraction devices including several key court decisions, general recommendations from case law, and preparing for court testimony.
 11. In a practical setting, safely demonstrate the learned procedures for deploying a distraction device.
- B. Questions from Class
- C. Closing Statement

The purpose of this block of instruction was to familiarize the SWAT team operator with a basic working knowledge of distraction devices. Being able to purchase and utilize this equipment will certainly contribute to the success of a mission. However, without strict policy, proper procedures, and training in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines, it can prevent the agency from using the devices for a purpose in which they were designed...to create an advantage for the team in order to control a situation favorably.

NOTES

- ¹ Heal, 20.
- ² Whitson and Clark, 14.
- ³ CTS Training Institute, March 2018.
- ⁶ CTS Training Institute, March 2018.
- ¹⁰ Dictionary.com, *Reaction time*.
- ¹¹ CTS Training Institute, March 2018.
- ¹⁹ CTS Training Institute, March 2018.
- ²⁰ CTS Training Institute, March 2018.
- ²¹ Institute for Defense Analyses, 24.
- ²² Merriam-Webster, *Distraction*.
- ²³ Safariland Training Group, December 2017.
- ²⁵ Whitson, 18.
- ²⁶ Whitson, 18
- ²⁷ Safariland Training Group, December 2017.
- ²⁸ Safariland Training Group, December 2017.
- ²⁹ CTS Training Institute, March 2018.
- ³⁰ Safariland Training Group, December 2017.
- ³¹ Safariland Training Group, December 2017.
- ³² Safariland Training Group, December 2017.
- ³³ Safariland Training Group, December 2017.
- ³⁴ Safariland Training Group, December 2017.
- ³⁵ Safariland Training Group, December 2017.
- ³⁶ CTS Training Institute, March 2018.
- ³⁷ Safariland Training Group, December 2017.
- ³⁸ CTS Training Institute, March 2018.
- ⁵³ CTS Training Institute, March 2018.
- ⁵⁴ *Garcia v. State*, Court of Appeals Texas, Dallas (1992)
- ⁵⁵ *Dukes v. Deaton*, 852 F. 3rd 1035 (2017)
- ⁵⁶ CTS Training Institute, March 2018.

TITLE:	Legal Issues for SWAT Operations
Lesson Purpose:	To alert students to current legal issues in SWAT operations and to provide information to the students to assist them in understanding the liability implications of their actions.
Training Objectives:	At the end of this block of instruction the student will be able to achieve the following objectives in accordance with the information presented during the instructional period: 1. Explain and apply the standard of “objective reasonableness” during use of force situations that SWAT operators may face. 2. Based on current legal precedence, discuss SWAT equipment issues and the impact on mission related tasks. 3. Explain and analyze the legal principles that apply during mission planning and execution that impact the overall mission. 4. Explain and analyze the statutes that apply during the execution of an arrest warrant and a search warrant as well as review of any recent incidents.
Hours:	Four (4)
Instructional Method:	Lecture/Discussion
Classroom Environment:	Academic Classroom
Materials Required:	Pen/Pencil Note Paper
References:	<i>Boyd v. Benton County</i>, 374 F.3d 773 (9th Cir. 2004). <i>Graham v. Conner</i>, 490 U.S. 386 (1989). <i>Green v. Ingram et al</i>, 269 Va. 281 (2005). <i>Holland v. Harrington</i>, 268 F.3d 1179 (10th Cir. 2001). <i>Jensen v. City of Oxnard</i>, 145 F.3d 1078 (9th Cir. 1998).

McNair v. Coffey, 279 F.3d 463 (7th Cir. 2002).

Muehler v. Mena, 544 U.S. 93 (2005).

North Carolina General Statutes, 15A-221, “General authority definition of consent”, (2015).

North Carolina General Statutes, 15A-222, “Person from whom effective consent maybe obtained)”, (2015).

North Carolina General Statutes, 15A-223, “Permissible scope of consent search and seizure”, (2015).

North Carolina General Statutes, 15A-231, “Other search and seizure”, (2015).

North Carolina General Statutes, 15A-249, “Officer to give notice of identity and purpose”, (2015).

North Carolina General Statutes, 15A-251, “Entry by force”, (2015).

North Carolina General Statutes, 15A-252, “Service of a search warrant”, (2015).

North Carolina General Statutes, 15A-253, “Scope of the search; seizure of items not named in the warrant”, (2015).

North Carolina General Statutes, 15A-255, “Frisk of persons present in premises or vehicle to be searched”, (2015).

North Carolina General Statutes, 15A-256, “Detention and search of persons present in private premises or vehicle to be searched”, (2015).

North Carolina General Statutes, 15A-401, “Arrest by law enforcement officer”, (2015).

Saucier v. Katz, 53 U.S.194 (2001)..

Sharrar v. Felsing, 128 F.3d 810 (3rd Cir. 1997).

U.S. v. Myers, 106 F.3d 936 (10th Cir. 1997).

United States Constitution, Fourth Amendment.

Velasco v. Fairall, 1998 U.S. App. LEXIS 1733 (4th Cir. 1998).

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I. Introduction

A. Opening Statement

The decision to institute a SWAT program, the development of a plan of operation, and the conduct of that operation, including decisions made by individual team members, raise questions of liability. In order to avoid liability under the federal Civil Rights Act of 1871 (42 U.S.C. §1983) you must not violate a clearly established, federally protected right.

Decisions made in an instant have lasting consequences. However, if the focus of planning and training is reasonableness, you can expect your decisions to be respected even when the consequences are unfortunate.

B. Training Objectives

C. Reasons

The issues we discuss today are just a few of the questions you will face as you prepare to plan and execute SWAT operations. Courts respect the reasonable decisions of well-trained operators. Learning to apply the standard of objective reasonableness will assist you in withstanding the criticisms and second-guessing that will be directed toward you and the team, regardless of the results you achieve.

II. Body

A. Use of Force

1. United States Constitution – 4th Amendment

- a) The 4th Amendment guarantees the right against unreasonable searches and seizures.
- b) A seizure occurs when someone's movements are restrained. A voluntary encounter, a stop or arrest can be perceived as a seizure.
- c) A search is an infringement on one's expectation of privacy.
- d) The 4th Amendment requires a warrant in order to search and seize a person or his/her belongings.

2. *Graham v. Connor*¹ – Objective reasonableness in the use of force

- a) Graham was diabetic. He felt the onset of a diabetic reaction and rushed into a convenience store to buy juice. When he saw the long line at the counter, he rushed out of the store into a friend's waiting car. Together, they went to a nearby friend's home intending to get juice there. Officer Connor considered Graham's actions at the convenience store suspicious and stopped the vehicle in which Graham was riding. Officer Connor called for backup and requested an officer to go to the convenience store to interview the clerk.
- b) Once stopped, Graham got out of the car, ran around it twice and passed out on the curb. When the backup officers arrived, they handcuffed Graham tightly behind his back and insisted he was just drunk. Graham's friend attempted to explain the medical condition. Another friend brought juice to the scene for Graham, but officers would not let him have it. When he awoke, officers picked him up, and placed him on the hood of a car, hitting his head on the hood in the process. Graham told the officers he had a diabetic decal in his wallet, but the officers did not look. Four officers took hold of him, picked him up and placed him headfirst in the patrol car. Officer Connor then learned that nothing had happened at the convenience store, and drove Graham home. Graham had a broken foot, swelling in his face and a ringing in his ear from the incident.
- c) The United States Supreme Court made clear in *Tennessee v. Garner* that an officer's use of deadly force fell under legal standard of reasonableness under the Fourth Amendment. Here, the Supreme Court extends that rule and states that any use of force by an officer falls under the *objective reasonableness* standard from the Fourth Amendment. The question to be asked is what a reasonable officer under similar circumstances could have done or could have believed.

3. *Saucier v. Katz*² -

- a) *Saucier v Katz*:

In 1994, an event was held on Presidio Army Base in order to celebrate the conversion of the base into a national park. Katz went to the army base with the intent to protest against animal cruelty while then Vice President Gore

spoke to the group in attendance. Katz had been identified by the Military Police (MP) earlier in the day as a potential protestor. As Katz began to unfold and hang his banner, he was removed from the crowd by MP Saucier and MP Parker. Katz claims that he was taken out of the crowd and thrown into a MP van. Katz filed suit claiming that excessive force had been used against him while he was removed from the crowd. The Court held that Saucier was entitled to qualified immunity.

- b) Questions posed by the Court in order to determine if qualified immunity applied:
 - (1) Were the actions of the LEO objectively reasonable in light of the facts and circumstances confronting them without regard to intent or motive? (from Graham)
 - (2) In so far as the LEO's conduct does not violate a clear Constitutional right that a reasonable person knows – qualified immunity applies.
 - (3) Even if the law is clear, qualified immunity may still apply if the reasonable officer in that instance believes that his/her conduct was lawful. This is the standard of the reasonable officer on the scene, not the reasonable officer with 20/20 hindsight. With the reasonable officer on the scene standard, even a mistake as to the law may still allow for qualified immunity to apply.

4. *Jensen v. City of Oxnard*³

- a) Oxnard Police Department's SWAT entered a two-story building to serve a search warrant. The officers deployed a distraction device. Officers Jensen and Christian then entered the second floor after the distraction device detonated. Sergeant Christian mistakenly saw Officer Jensen as a "gun-wielding occupant of the premises" and shot and killed Officer Jensen. Officer Jensen's widow sued claiming excessive force.
- b) Sergeant Christian argued that because Jensen was a police officer killed in the line of duty, his widow could not claim a §1983 injury. However, the court found that an officer

does not forfeit his or her constitutional rights when they become a police officer.

- c) The court finds that “on the day he was killed, Officer Jensen had a right to be free from unreasonable seizure in violation of his Fourth Amendment rights . . . Precedent informs us that: (1) excessive force claims are to be analyzed under Fourth Amendment standards; (2) police officers retain their fourth amendment rights; and (3) it is a violation of the Fourth Amendment for law enforcement personnel to use deadly force unless the individual at whom that force is directed presents an immediate or serious threat of danger. Common sense tells us that, if these clearly established precedents are to mean anything, Officer Jensen had the right to be free from an unreasonable seizure even from a fellow officer in the course of police work.”⁴
- d) Based on those findings the court found that Sergeant Christian acted unreasonably when he shot Officer Jensen.

B. Equipment

1. Frangible Breaching Rounds

*Green v. Ingram et al*⁵

- a) Richmond SWAT was deployed to serve a search warrant on a home where illegal drugs and firearms were believed to be located. Sergeant Ingram had the assignment of breaching the kitchen door using frangible breaching rounds. “The kitchen door was an exterior, heavy, windowless, composite wood door, with a lockless doorknob set below a single cylinder deadbolt lock mortised to the door.” First, Ingram attempted to open the door by turning the doorknob. The knob turned freely but the door did not open indicating to Ingram that the deadbolt was engaged. He then used his shotgun to fire the frangible breaching rounds at the door lock. Evidence showed he fired at a downward angle. He fired four more frangible rounds into the door. He testified he fired each one at an increasingly steeped angle downward. He testified he fired the first between the lock and the frame the next four an inch lower than the one before it in a vertical line. He did a visual check and toe-check between each round in an attempt to open the door. After five rounds, he still could not open the door. When asked, Ingram testified that he

was aware of the possibility of persons behind the door. A battering ram was used to open the door and enter the home.

- b) Upon entering the home, Ingram found the body of Green, a visitor to the home. She was draped over her three-year-old daughter who was not injured. The autopsy showed Green's cause of death to be from the frangible round fragments.
- c) The trial court heard evidence regarding the manufacturer's specifications of the frangible rounds as well as SWAT's training and policy on using the rounds specifically that they were to be aimed at "a metal mechanism attached to the door."⁶ The jury could not reach a verdict and the judge found for Ingram.
- d) On appeal, the Virginia Supreme Court reversed the trial court and found that it was possible that a jury could reach a verdict on whether or not the officer used gross negligence.
- e) "A reasonable jury could conclude that Ingram departed from instruction and training, and fired in a location below the lock rather than between the lock and the frame. Given Ingram's own testimony about assumptions made concerning the presence of people on the other side of the door, a reasonable jury could have concluded that Ingram acted 'with a degree of negligence which shows indifference to others as constitutes an utter disregard of prudence amounting to a complete neglect of the safety' of others."⁷

2. Distraction Devices

- a) *U.S. v. Myers*⁸
 - (1) The Kansas Bureau of Investigation (KBI) executed a search warrant on the home of Myers with the belief that Myers was manufacturing and distributing narcotics from his home. They approached the home at night, knocked and announced their presence and purpose. The officers waited ten seconds and then battered in the door and rolled a distraction device into the home. Once the device exploded the officers entered the residence

and found Myers, his wife, and three children, ages 19, 9, and 17 months.

- (2) Myers challenged the officer's use of the "military style assault"⁹ (the plaintiff's wording). The court analyzes this challenge with the "objective reasonableness" test from *Graham v. Connor*.
- (3) "The use of a 'flash-bang' device in a house where innocent and unsuspecting children sleep gives us great pause. Certainly, we could not countenance the use of such a device as a routine matter. . . . However, we also recognize that we must review the agents' actions from the perspective of reasonable agents on the scene . . . who are legitimately concerned with not only doing their job, but with their own safety. Although it might seem that the KBI's actions in this case come dangerously close to a Fourth Amendment violation, we cannot say that their actions were objectively unreasonable."¹⁰

b) *Boyd v. Benton County*¹¹

- (1) After an armed robbery in Oregon, officers received a search warrant for the suspect's residence. The officers asked Benton County SWAT to assist in securing the apartment before the search began. The SWAT supervisor determined that a distraction device should be used to gain entry and secure the premises. One concern was that the officers knew several people would be sleeping in various locations around the apartment. They decided to deploy the device near the front wall and door because of the minimal risk someone would be sleeping there. Deputy Ellison was chosen to deploy the distraction device. At the execution of the warrant, officers announced their presence and Ellison reached inside the door of the apartment and, without looking, tossed the device into the residence within a few feet of the front wall and door. Boyd was sleeping in that area and suffered burns on her forearm from the device.
- (2) Boyd argued that the use of the distraction device constituted excessive force and was a violation of

her Fourth Amendment rights. The court finds that the use of force in this case was constitutionally unreasonable, and therefore excessive.

- (3) “[G]iven the inherently dangerous nature of the flash-bang device, it cannot be a reasonable use of force under the Fourth Amendment to throw it ‘blind’ into a room occupied by innocent bystanders absent a strong governmental interest, careful consideration of alternatives and appropriate measures to reduce the risk of injury.”¹²
- (4) However, the court still granted the officer qualified immunity because this violation was not clearly established at the time of the incident.¹³ (It would be considered clearly established now – BE ON NOTICE! Require and practice sighted delivery.)

C. Operations

1. *McNair v. Coffey*¹⁴ -- SWAT team during traffic stops

- a) Officer Coffey had probable cause to believe the driver of the vehicle, McNair had unpaid parking tickets. Coffey activated his blue lights to pull the driver and passenger over. The vehicle did not pull over right away. Because it was nighttime, in a high crime neighborhood, and two suspects refusing to pull over, Coffey called for backup. When McNair did pull over he was surrounded by eight squad cars and ordered out of the car with his hands up. He was issued tickets and released within an hour.
- b) In the civil suit, the jurors awarded McNair and his passenger \$5, 000 each to compensate for the “indignity of the situation.” On appeal, the district court found the officers were entitled to summary judgment because a reasonable officer would not have known that calling in a SWAT team for backup on a traffic stop would have violated anyone’s constitutional rights. This court agrees.
- c) “The use of a swat [sic] team to make a traffic stop could have consequences under the fourth amendment. If, for example, a suspect’s consent to search were prompted by fear that the officers would react violently to a refusal, then the consent would be deemed involuntary and set aside. If edgy officers opened fire that too could lead to liability.”¹⁵

2. *Holland v. Harrington*¹⁶-- Decision to use SWAT and tactics at scene
- a) After a violent group fight in a Colorado restaurant, officers narrowed their suspects to Sammy Heflin. They received misdemeanor assault arrest warrants and search warrants for him. The officers called in SWAT to assist with the warrants. SWAT arrived, dressed in full gear with laser sighted weapons. They encountered three teenage males outside, ordered them to lie on the ground with weapons pointed at the teens. SWAT encountered another teenage male and ordered him to the ground with the weapon pointed at him. A four year old girl saw the SWAT team and ran screaming into the house. A SWAT member followed her inside. He had his laser sight pointed at her. Witnesses said they saw the red dot on the child's back as she ran to her mother. SWAT also used what the court referred to as "foul" and "abusive" language in dealing with the suspects. After entering the home, SWAT encountered several adults. There was no resistance and the search warrant was executed and the arrest was made of Sammy Heflin. The officers were sued for the search and for the practices and decisions of SWAT.
 - b) The SWAT supervisor was sued for his decision to use SWAT in this situation. "The decision to use a SWAT team to make a 'dynamic entry' into a residence constitutes conduct 'immediately connected with the seizure' because it determines the degree of force initially to be applied in effecting the seizure itself. If, as *Garner* instructs, 'it is plain that reasonableness depends on not only when a seizure is made but how it is carried out,' . . . then the decision to deploy a SWAT team to execute a warrant must be 'reasonable' because it largely determines how the seizure is carried out, thereby determining the extent of the intrusion on the individual's Fourth Amendment interests."¹⁷ The court finds that the decision to use SWAT in this case was not excessive. The supervisor was entitled to qualified immunity on this issue.
 - c) The court found that SWAT members holding children at gunpoint to be a violation of the Fourth Amendment. "Where a person has submitted to the officer's show of force without resistance, and where an officer had no reasonable cause to believe that person poses a danger to the officer or others, it may be excessive and unreasonable

to continue to aim a loaded firearm directly at that person, in contrast to simply holding the weapon in a fashion ready for immediate use. Pointing a firearm directly at a child calls for even greater sensitivity to what may be justified or what may be excessive under all circumstances.”¹⁸

- d) The court also took issue with the “harsh language” used by the officers to the bystanders at the residence. “In evaluating Fourth Amendment reasonableness of a seizure, the officers’ verbal interaction as well as their physical conduct becomes part of the totality of the circumstances to be considered. While it seems unlikely that harsh language alone would render a search or seizure ‘unreasonable,’ verbal abuse may be sufficient to tip the scales in a close case.”¹⁹
- e) The court also issues a warning for SWAT teams: “Outfitting sheriff’s deputies in hooded combat fatigues, arming them with laser-sighted weapons and ordering them to conduct the ‘dynamic entry’ of a private home does not exempt their conduct from Fourth Amendment standards of reasonableness. The ‘SWAT’ designation does not grant license to law enforcement officers to abuse suspects or bystanders, or to vent in an unprofessional manner their own pent-up aggression, personal frustration or animosity toward others. If anything, the special circumstances and greater risks that warrant ‘dynamic entry’ by a SWAT team call for *more* discipline, control, mindfulness, and restraint on the part of law enforcement, not less. SWAT officers are specially trained and equipped to deal with a variety of difficult situations, including those requiring a swift and overwhelming show of force. At all times, SWAT officers no less than others – dressed in camouflage or not – must keep it clearly in mind that we are *not* at war with our own people.”²⁰

3. *Sharrar v. Felsing*²¹-- Surrounding a house equal to arrest

- a) During an investigation of an assault with a gun, the police sought as a suspect the victim’s ex-husband, Brigden. He was in his home with the Sharrar brothers. SWAT surrounded Brigden’s house. Dressed in black and carrying a “shotgun” and a “machine gun” (the plaintiff’s description), the three men inside the house alleged they did not realize they were police until they picked up the phone to call for help and the SWAT supervisor was on the

phone. The three men were told who the men in the yard were. The men were told to put their hands in the air and walk backwards outside to the officers. The men complied.

- b) While the court found that the arrest was made with probable cause, it was still an illegal arrest because the court considered the men arrested while in their home and without a warrant.
- c) “Under any of these tests, when a SWAT team surrounds a residence with machine guns pointed at the windows and persons inside are ordered to leave the house backwards with their hands raised, an arrest has undoubtedly occurred. There was a clear show of physical force and assertion of authority. No person would have believed that he was free to remain in the house. We hold that under these circumstances the arrests occurred inside Brigden’s home . . . Therefore, the police were required to have secured an arrest warrant unless there were exigent circumstances.”²²

4. *Muehler v. Mena*²³-- Handcuffing during execution of warrant

- a) During the execution of the search warrant for armed gang members, SWAT entered and woke up the plaintiff, Mena. SWAT handcuffed her and moved her into another part of the residence while the search was conducted. While handcuffed, the officers asked Mena her name, date of birth and immigration status. After the search, Mena was released.
- b) The Court found that, based on previous cases, officers executing a search warrant can detain all occupants of the premises. The Court found that the detention of Mena was clearly permissible. The Court also stated that inherent in the officer’s authority to detain is the authority to use reasonable force to do so.
- c) “The officer’s use of force in the form of handcuffs to effectuate Mena’s detention in the garage, as well as the detention of the three other occupants, was reasonable because the governmental interests outweigh the marginal intrusion. . . . But this was no ordinary search. The governmental interest in not only detaining, but using handcuffs, are at their maximum when, as here, a warrant authorizes a search for weapons and a wanted gang member resides on the premises. In such inherently

dangerous situations, the use of handcuffs minimizes the risk of harm to both officers and occupants. . . [T]he need to detain multiple occupants made the use of handcuffs all the more reasonable.”²⁴

- d) The court also found that the officer’s 2 to 3 hour detention of Mena was reasonable in length.

5. *Velasco v. Fairall*²⁵ -- Searching the wrong house

- a) Prior to the execution of a search warrant for 14287 Bell Ami Drive, Officer Fairall drove by the target residence. After finding the house described in the warrant by location in the row of houses and matching the physical description, he contacted the ERT leader to clarify if the address to be searched was actually 14283. There was a misunderstanding in the communication and the ERT searched 14283 which was the wrong address. The ERT left as soon as they realized they were in the wrong house.
- b) “Because Fairall took reasonable steps to ensure that the ERT entered the correct residence and a reasonable officer under similar circumstances would believe he was acting lawfully, Fairall is entitled to qualified immunity.”²⁶

D. SWAT Legal Issues

1. Statutes

a) 15A- Article 20 Arrest

- (1) 15A-401(a)²⁷ -- Arrest with a warrant
- (2) 15A-401(b)²⁸ – Arrest without a warrant
- (3) 15A-401(c)²⁹ – How an arrest is made
- (4) 15A-401(d)³⁰ – Use of force
- (5) 15A-401(e)³¹ – Entry onto private land/vehicle – use of force
- (6) 15A-401(f)³² – Use of deadly force/deadly force to resist arrest
- (7) 15A-401(g)³³ – Care of minor children

b) Third Party Residences

Absent consent or exigent circumstances, the officer must have a search warrant (to protect the privacy interest of the third party) in addition to an arrest warrant (to allow the arrest if the suspect is within the residence of the third party).³⁴

c) 15A Article 9 Search and Seizure by Consent

- (1) 15A-221³⁵ – General authorization; consent defined
- (2) 15A-222³⁶ – Person from whom effective consent may be obtained
- (3) 15A-223³⁷ – Permissible scope of consent search and seizure

d) 15A Article 10 Other Search and Seizures

15A-231 – “Constitutionally permissible searches which are not regulated by the General Statutes of North Carolina are not prohibited.”³⁸

e) 15A Article 11 Search Warrants

- (1) 15A-249 – Officer to give notice of identity and purpose³⁹
- (2) 15A-251⁴⁰ – Entry by force
- (3) 15A-252⁴¹ – Service of a search warrant
- (4) 15A-253⁴² – Scope of the search; seizure of items not named in the warrant
- (5) 15A-255⁴³ – Frisk of person present in premises or vehicle to be searched

2. Recent Incidents

- a) 2014 Georgia – flash bang landed in crib of young child with no knock warrant for drugs

- b) 2010 Georgia – flash bang landed where woman slept with no knock warrant looking for her boyfriend
- c) 2006 Georgia – 4.9 million paid out to family of deceased 92 year old woman – drug warrant
- d) 2011 California – 2.6 million paid out to family of deceased father – looking for evidence of shooting

3. SWAT Article from the New York Times

III. Conclusion

A. Summary

In this block of instruction we have discussed the legal issues that face operators and SWAT. We can see that even when it is alleged that an officer has violated a protected right, the officer may claim qualified immunity if what the officer did was objectively reasonable. The Courts have shown that officers must be judged on the basis of what they knew at the time, not with the benefit of hindsight.

B. Questions

C. Closing Statement

SWAT operations are by their very nature high risk events. That risk is not only physical, but legal in nature. The key for success is reasonableness. If what you do is reasonable, it will be respected by the judicial system.

NOTES

¹ *Graham v. Connor* 490 U.S. 386 (1989).

² *Saucier v. Katz*, 533 U.S. 194 (2001).

³ *Jensen v. City of Oxnard*, 145 F.3d 1078 (9th Cir. 1998).

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1086.

⁵ *Green v. Ingram et al*, 269 Va. 281 (2005).

⁶ *Ibid.*, 291.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 290.

⁸ *U.S. v. Myers*, 106 F.3d 936 (10th Cir. 1997).

⁹ *Ibid.*, 940.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Boyd v. Benton County*, 374 F.3d 773 (9th Cir., 2004).

¹² *Ibid.*, 779.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 784.

¹⁴ *McNair v. Coffey*, 279 F.3d 463 (7th Cir. 2002).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 468.

¹⁶ *Holland v. Harrington*, 268 F.3d 1179 (10th Cir. 2001).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1190.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1193.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1194.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1194-1195.

²¹ *Sharrar v. Felsing*, 128 F.3d 810 (3rd Cir. 1997).

²² *Ibid.*, 819-820.

²³ *Muehler v. Mena*, 544 U.S. 93 (2005).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 199-100.

²⁵ *Velasco v. Fairall* 1998 U.S. App. LEXIS 1733 (4th Cir. 1998).

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

²⁷ N.C.G.S. § 15A-401(a)(2015).

²⁸ N.C.G.S. § 15A-401(b)(2015).

²⁹ N.C.G.S. § 15A-401(c)(2015).

³⁰ N.C.G.S. § 15A-401(d)(2015).

³¹ N.C.G.S. § 15A-401(e)(2015).

³² N.C.G.S. § 15A-401(f)(2015).

³³ N.C.G.S. § 15A-401(g)(2015).

³⁴ *Steagald v. United States*, 451 U.S. 201 (1981).

³⁵ N.C.G.S. § 15A-221 (2015).

³⁶ N.C.G.S. § 15A-222 (2015).

³⁷ N.C.G.S. § 15A-223 (2015).

³⁸ N.C.G.S. 15A-231 (2015).

³⁹ N.C.G.S. § 15A-249 (2015).

⁴⁰ N.C.G.S. § 15A-251 (2015).

⁴¹ N.C.G.S. § 15A-252 (2015).

⁴² N.C.G.S. § 15A-253 (2015).

⁴³ N.C.G.S. § 15A-255 (2015).