


<b>STRATFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT</b>  	Type of Directive: <b>Policy and Procedure</b>	Updated: <b>04-30-2024</b>
	Title: <b>Special Response Team / Barricaded Persons</b>	No. <b>9.3</b>
	Issuing Authority: <b>Chief Joseph McNeil</b>	Issued: <b>03-19-2021</b>
	Reference: 1.13.9, 2.5.9, 3.4.13  History: 04-16-23	

### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to establish a mandate, structure, and general operating procedures under which the Stratford Police Special Response Team shall operate.

### **POLICY:**

The presence of a highly trained, highly skilled, disciplined, cohesive, and well-equipped police tactical unit has been shown to substantially reduce the risk of injury and loss of life to citizens, police officers, and suspects, when called upon to assist in the resolution of critical incidents.

It is the intent of the Stratford Police Department to have such a unit as a tactical resource. The primary objective of the Special Response Team is to preserve life. In addition, the unit will be responsible for the enforcement of Federal, State, and local laws and ordinances and the successful resolution of critical incident situations. The secondary mission of the Special Response Team will be to provide a wide range of police services, in furtherance of department goals and objectives.

### **DEFINITIONS:**

**Barricaded Person** – Person(s) who are reasonably believed to be a threat to commit serious physical injury or death to hostages, officers, or others in the community, who are in a stronghold position, and who is refusing or failing to surrender to police.

**CNT** – Crisis Negotiation Team

**High Risk Apprehension** – The arrest or apprehension of armed or potentially dangerous suspects, where the likelihood of armed or violent resistance is high, or where potential risk to involved officers is higher than normal.

**High Risk Search & Seizure Warrant Service** – Search warrant executions requiring, or likely requiring, forced entry and dynamic room clearing techniques.

**High Risk Surveillance** – Surveillance and/or stake-out operations involving suspects with a high potential for armed encounter or violence.

**Hostage** – A person, held against their will by the threat of, or actual use of force. No distinction should be made as to how or why the victim was taken hostage.

**Personal Protection** – The security of special persons, such as visiting dignitaries, VIP's, famous or notorious persons, witnesses, and suspects, based on threat or potential threat to their safety and/or security.

**Sniper Situations** - The firing upon citizens and/or police by an armed suspect, stationary or mobile.

**Special Assignments** – Any assignment approved by the Chief of Police or the Deputy Chief of Police based upon a high degree of threat potential, such as large gatherings, large protest marches, or situations requiring the presence of a significant number of sworn Stratford Police personnel.

**SRT** – Special Response Team

## **PROCEDURES:**

### **Initial Response - Patrol Officers**

Patrol Officers who encounter a situation that is or develops into a high risk /hostage / barricaded person(s) incident shall immediately notify dispatch of the situation and avoid unnecessary confrontation, when possible, in favor of controlling and containing the situation **(2.5.9a)**.

Dispatch shall advise a supervisory officer, if not already on-scene, of the incident and the present scene circumstances, with notification also being made to the Patrol Operations Commander. Patrol Officers shall continue to work to contain the scene, if possible, and await further instructions and/or the arrival of other supporting personnel.

Officers shall attempt to:

- Contain and isolate the incident scene, establishing an inner containment perimeter.
- Provide a reasonable degree of safety while maintaining contact with the incident scene.
- As time and resources permit, establish an outer containment perimeter to control pedestrian and vehicular traffic into the area.
- As soon as possible, evacuate bystanders and injured persons in the line of fire and isolate witnesses in a safe location to a point beyond the perimeter **(2.5.9g, 2.5.9h)**.
- Establish a central Command Post and initiate the Incident Command System **(2.5.9i)**.

### **Incident Command and Control**

Prior to the arrival of the SRT, the Patrol Shift Commander shall establish an inner and outer perimeter, command post, staging area, redirect vehicular and pedestrian traffic away from the area, evacuate the area (if needed), and contain the situation to the best of their ability.

The Patrol Shift Commander shall constantly communicate information updates to the Dispatcher and should attempt to gather as much intelligence as possible on the situation and communicate that information to the SRT commander upon the unit's arrival.

The Patrol/Incident Commander or supervisor at the scene may be replaced by responding officers of superior rank. Based on the seriousness of high risk /hostage /barricaded person incidents, the Stratford Police Department will utilize the Incident Command System. The following will also occur:

- The Incident Commander shall further advise the Chief, Deputy Chief, and/or their designee about the nature and circumstances surrounding the incident once the situation is contained.
- The Chief, Deputy Chief, and/or their designee will make the decision as to the deployment of the Special Response Team (SRT). The Incident Commander will also notify, or cause to be notified, the appropriate persons within and outside the agency, such as command officers, crisis negotiation team, dog handlers, or other personnel **(2.5.9b, 2.5.9d)**.
- The Incident Commander and SRT Commander have the authority to authorize the use of force to include chemical agents dependent on situational need and in accordance with the use of force policy **(2.5.9L)**.
- The Incident Commander shall designate an officer or officer(s), as support staffing permits **(2.5.9m)**, to:
  - Ensure the establishment of an inner and outer perimeter, central command post, tactical operations center, and a staging area for officers and others arriving for assignment **(2.5.9f)**.
  - As appropriate, or if necessary and possible, establish a press center and assign an officer for press liaison consistent with policy. Only the Chief of Police, Deputy Chief of Police, or the Department Public Information Officer, shall discuss with members of the media the actions, capabilities, tactics, plans, or personnel of the SRT **(2.5.9k)**.
  - Ensure that ambulance, rescue, fire, and surveillance vehicles or equipment are requested when necessary **(2.5.9j)**.
  - Ensure that responsibility for traffic and crowd control is established and that routes for emergency vehicles have been designated.
  - Establish pursuit and surveillance vehicles and gain control of applicable travel routes **(2.5.9n)**.
  - Ensure that if the incident involves other agencies, communications will be maintained with such agencies **(2.5.9e)**.

### **High Risk / Hostage / Barricaded Person Situations**

Unless a hostage is in imminent danger of being assaulted or killed, the SRT commander shall consult and coordinate efforts with the Crisis Negotiating Team, if available, prior to taking any actions of a tactical nature that may cause damage to the negotiation process.

The Stratford Police Department will consider the safety of hostages, civilians, and officers involved in high risk /hostage /barricaded person incidents to be of utmost importance. Whenever possible, attempts to enhance the prospects of peacefully resolving an incident will be made by communication with the suspect(s) **(2.5.9a)**. Should communications fail, alternative approaches to resolving the incident should be developed, maintained, and used. In hostage situations, every reasonable effort to affect the safe release of the hostages should be made.

Nothing in this order, however, shall preclude officers from using such force as necessary, when appropriate, consistent with State Statute and other Department policies.

## **Activation**

Only the Chief of Police or the Deputy Chief of Police shall be authorized to activate the SRT.

Upon authorization to activate the SRT, the Patrol Shift Commander shall direct the Desk Sergeant to initiate a telephone call-out of the SRT and any other crisis management personnel as may be required to properly address and resolve the pending crisis.

The SRT may be activated in cases of:

- Barricaded persons
- Bomb and explosive incidents
- High risk arrest situations
- High risk surveillance
- High risk warrant service
- Homeland security situations
- Hostage situations
- Mass arrest situations involving rioting, civil disturbances, protests, labor unrest, and unlawful assemblies
- Personal protection
- Sniper situations
- Suicidal persons
- Terrorist acts (either threatened or actual) including the use of threatened use of weapons of mass destruction
- Other incidents which are beyond the capabilities of the Patrol Division and which are in furtherance of the Police Department's mission.

When determining if the SRT should be deployed, these issues should be considered:

- Has the suspect committed a serious criminal offense?
- What is the mental condition/history of the suspect?
- Is the suspect armed, believed to be armed, or has a history of being armed and/or using weapons?
- Has the suspect refused to submit to arrest and/or has a history of resisting arrest?
- Is the nature of the situation such that an unacceptable risk exists to the public and responding police officers?

## **Crisis Negotiators/Special Response Team Unit**

- If deemed appropriate by the Incident Commander, the Department will utilize Crisis Negotiators to assist in high risk /hostage /barricaded person incidents to aid in the safest resolution of an incident as provided by the circumstances.
- The SPD SRT will be responsible for planning and initiating any tactical plans should negotiations prove ineffective or the situation escalates such as to require an immediate tactical response. Once on-site, in place, and completely briefed, by the incident commander, the SRT Commander and the Incident Command shall work cooperatively, with the SRT Commander assuming primary

responsibility for personnel and operations within the inner perimeter. The Incident Commander shall have overall command of the scene, as well as responsibility for ancillary duties, including but not limited to securing the outer perimeter, crowd control, staging area for Fire and EMS, notification to the Chief and command staff, arranging proper relief for officers during a prolonged incident, media relations, food, etc.

- Negotiators will work together with officers and/or SRT members (if present) who will provide support during the incident and, as such, will be activated and deployed in the same manner. The Department will use trained negotiation personnel when available as the primary negotiator(s).

Negotiators will:

- Obtain all pertinent information about the hostage taker, the hostages, the hostage site, and other barricaded subjects.
- Designate a location to interview witnesses and other involved parties.

As the incident begins to evolve and if manpower permits, the Incident Commander may appoint an officer as the liaison point of contact between the negotiation team, the tactical team, and the command structure. The liaison officer will continually update the leaders of all three elements as events develop **(2.5.9c)**.

### **Bomb and Explosive Threats or Incidents**

In the event that the SRT, while conducting an operation, suspects or receives information of a bomb or explosive device, they shall secure the area and notify the Fire Department, the Connecticut State Police Bomb Squad, and/or the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives.

In the event that the SRT is activated and responds to the scene of a bomb or explosive device incident, they shall secure the area and allow bomb disposal professionals to address the device itself.

The use of radio communications shall be restricted. The SRT should attempt to gather as much field intelligence as possible prior to the arrival of a specialized bomb disposal unit. However, at no time shall any member of the SRT attempt to further identify, move, manipulate, defuse or detonate the device or suspected device. Refer to SPD Policy 7.24, Bomb Threats.

### **CONCLUSION OF INCIDENT:**

At the time the barricaded/hostage incident is ended, the Supervisor in Charge of the incident or their designee(s) shall:

- Ensure that all persons having suffered any physical injury receive care as promptly as possible,
- Assign an officer fully knowledgeable of the incident to determine charges or other disposition of the subject(s),
- Ensure the collection of evidence at the scene as well as still and video photography,
- Release special equipment as orderly and early as possible,
- Ensure that Detective Bureau personnel debrief hostages,
- Remove the perimeters as soon as possible and provide for notice to evacuated persons that they may return to the area,
- As necessary, hold a press conference with media representatives,

- The Incident Commander or his/her designee will conduct an After-Action debriefing with all involved personnel and complete an After-Action Report concerning the incident **(2.5.9o)**.
- Ensure that officers and specialized units involved in the incident complete a report detailing their involvement.
- A mandatory debriefing meeting of the SRT members will occur following the incident. The SRT Commander or designee will be responsible for establishing and conducting this debriefing **(2.5.9o)**.

### **SRT Personnel**

The SRT shall be comprised solely of sworn members of the Stratford Police Department holding the ranks of Patrol Officer, Detective, or Sergeant, (with exception of Commander and Deputy Commander) who are POSTC certified and in good standing. All members of the SRT shall be volunteers, be in excellent physical condition and must successfully complete a physical agility test administered by appointed personnel. SRT members must also successfully pass a pistol qualification course with a minimum score of 270.

A minimum of three years of service with the Stratford Police Department is required to join the unit; however, individuals with prior military and/or police experience shall receive consideration by the Chief of Police for assignment to the SRT.

All members of the SRT must agree to be on-call whenever the demands of the Police Department dictate so.

### **Crisis Negotiation Team Personnel**

The CNT shall be comprised solely of sworn members of the Stratford Police Department holding the ranks of Patrol Officer, Detective, Sergeant or Lieutenant, who are POSTC certified and in good standing. All members of the CNT shall be volunteers.

A minimum of three years of service with the Stratford Police Department is required to join the unit; however, individuals with prior military and/or police experience shall receive consideration by the Chief of Police for assignment to the CNT.

All members of the CNT must agree to be on-call whenever the demands of the Police Department dictate so.

Selection and Training - The Chief of Police or his/her designee will screen and select interested officers to the Crisis Negotiating Team. Selected officers must attend and pass a recognized and standardized basic police Crisis Negotiation course **(3.4.13)**.

### **Equipment**

The SRT commander shall ensure that all Police Department owned property is properly maintained and remains in serviceable condition. Individual SRT members shall be responsible for the care and maintenance of all equipment issued to them.

At the conclusion of each SRT activation or training session, each member of the SRT, including the SRT commander, shall ensure that all equipment is cleaned, checked for proper operability, and returned to its proper place for storage, if applicable. SRT equipment must be maintained at a constant state of readiness in the event that a rapid deployment of the SRT is required.

The SRT commander shall submit in writing to the Chief of Police or the Deputy Chief of Police requests for equipment acquisitions involving all non-commodity items. Any requests to acquire or purchase items such as automatic weapons, armored vehicles, chemical munitions, or other specialized equipment will be accompanied by a detailed written explanation as to the item's intended use, cost, and justification of need.

## **Vehicles**

Only members of the SRT shall operate SRT vehicles for the purposes of responding to a call for service, training. Such vehicles may include but are not limited to armored vehicles, equipment and transport vehicles patrol vehicles, unmarked or undercover vehicles.

Civilian vehicle maintenance personnel may operate SRT vehicles for maintenance purposes only.

The SRT commander shall ensure that SRT vehicles are maintained at a secure site in a state of constant readiness.

## **Mutual Assistance to Other Law Enforcement Organizations**

Other law enforcement agencies may request the assistance of the SPD SRT. It shall be the policy of the Stratford Police Department to honor such requests when:

- A police mutual assistance compact has been entered into pursuant to Connecticut General Statute 7-277a,
- A request is received from the Chief Law Enforcement Executive of the requesting agency or his designee,
- The Chief of Police or the Deputy Chief of Police approves such request.
- There is an understanding that reimbursement for said services will be made pursuant to State Statute.

Two types of assistance will be provided

**Primary Assistance** – Upon arrival of the SRT, the SRT commander shall assume full control and responsibility for Tactical Command decisions and all tactical police personnel and equipment. This does not preclude consultation between members of the Stratford Police Department command staff, the incident commander, and the command staff of the requesting agency.

**Secondary Assistance** – Upon arrival of the SRT, the unit will assume a support role to the requesting agency, which shall retain operations command and control of the incident. SRT unit integrity will be maintained under the command of the SRT commander. The SRT commander shall accept assignments from the requesting agency's incident commander, however if in the opinion of the SRT commander the orders and directives of the requesting agency are illegal or unsafe in nature, then the SRT commander

shall notify incident commander of the requesting agency of his opinion and shall disengage the SRT from such activity and consult with the Stratford Chief of Police or Deputy Chief of Police.

The decision as to providing primary or secondary assistance will be made by the SRT Commander after consultation with the requesting agency commanders and Stratford Police Department Command staff.

- The requesting agency shall assign a supervisor or command level officer to the SRT as a liaison for the duration of the incident.
- The SRT Commander has discretion for the withdrawal of SRT during any stage in the event.

### **Personal Protection**

From time to time, the Stratford Police Department may be called upon to provide or assist in providing security for VIP's, dignitaries, etc. The SRT may be activated when the Chief of Police or the Deputy Chief of Police determines that special precautions or procedures should be utilized to provide personal protection.

### **Training**

Periodic specialized training shall be conducted for all members of the SRT. This training shall be in addition to any mandatory training required per state law. At a minimum, all personnel assigned to the team are required to engage in training exercises annually.

It shall be the responsibility of the SRT commander to coordinate any SRT training with the Training Division Lieutenant to ensure proper credit and documentation while ensuring the most effective, efficient, modern and safest methods of instruction are followed.

The Training Division shall be the sole repository for all training records. The Training Division shall maintain a file relating to all SRT training to include names of officers receiving training, the trainer(s), the trainer(s) qualifications, dates, locations, and types of training received and police training records applicable to SRT functions.

The SRT Commander shall make recommendations to the Chief of Police in regards to training schedules, materials and equipment needed special training programs, seminars, or other opportunities that may benefit the SRT, its members, and the Stratford Police Department in general.

### **Inspections, Audits, and Accreditation**

The Deputy Chief is responsible for conducting inspections of SRT operations to ensure adherence to procedures set forth in this SPD policy, (9.3) – Special Response Teams.

The SRT Bureau Commander shall provide yearly proofs of adherence to POSTC Standard 2.5.7 and upload said proofs into Power DMS.