

WOONSOCKET POLICE DEPARTMENT

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CHIEF OF POLICE



TYPE OF ORDER	NUMBER/SERIES	ISSUE DATE	EFFECTIVE DATE
General Order	360.01	5/5/2025	5/5/2025
SUBJECT		PREVIOUSLY ISSUED DATES	
Special Response Team		10/4/2013, 3/21/2019	
ACCREDITATION		RE-EVALUATION DATE	
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INDEX		DISTRIBUTION	
Chapter		Sworn Personnel	

SPECIAL RESPONSE TEAM

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures, guidelines, and composition requirements for the Special Response Team (SRT) of the Woonsocket Police Department. The purpose of this policy is to establish control and procedures in a manner most likely to minimize the loss of life, injury, or property damage when a traditional police response would be inadequate or ineffective during a potentially high-risk situation.

The SRT will be comprised of members who display the highest standards of professionalism, as well as the highest physical and psychological standards. The SRT must always demand excellence during training, team actions, and while carrying out assignments.

II. POLICY

The SRT is a specially selected and trained group that provides a concentration of resources and expertise at a level that could not be achieved as easily or effectively by conventional operational elements.

The use of SRT personnel instills confidence in the department and fellow officers and reduces the likelihood of severe injuries to on-scene officers, victims, innocent bystanders, and perpetrators.

Effective deployment of personnel such as the SRT, based upon a careful analysis of many social and organizational variables will usually bring about a desired effect.

III. DEFINITIONS

Command Post: The location that serves as the coordination center for incident management.

Incident Commander (IC) or Officer-in-Charge(OIC): The on-duty division, patrol, shift supervisor, or member responsible for the management of all incident operations at the incident site. If multiple situations exist, there may be more than one IC.

Crisis Negotiation Team: Members of the department who are specially trained in handling hostage/barricade situations and work in tandem with the SRT to bring resolution to a variety of situations.

Inner Perimeter: The immediate area of containment set up to control the movement of the subject(s). This area is initially staffed by patrol personnel.

Outer Perimeter: Control area that is set up around the inner perimeter to prevent people and vehicular traffic from gaining access to the affected area. This is staffed by patrol personnel.

Incident Action Plan (IAP): Contains objectives reflecting the overall incident strategy and specific tactical actions and supporting information for the next operational period. The plan may be written or oral.

Medic: Personnel who have been trained to at least an EMT-B level, train regularly with the SRT Team, and are responsible for providing first aid and front-line trauma care in a hostile environment.

Staging Area: Specified location to mobilize department members and members of the SRT

SRT: Special Response Team. Comprised of department members who have received training in the use of special weapons and tactical situations.

SRT Commander: An SRT member appointed by the Chief of Police for their expertise in special weapons and tactical operations. The SRT Commander will have complete authority over all members of the SRT regardless of rank. In the absence of the SRT Commander, the SRT Team Leader will assume their responsibilities.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. ROLE OF THE SRT

1. The SRT is responsible for responding to critical situations wherein the likelihood of the use of force to resolve an outcome is present. Examples of such situations include the taking of a hostage, a barricaded subject, or tactical entry to a potentially hostile environment, such as a raid on a drug house.

The SRT will strive to resolve any situation with the minimal amount of force necessary to affect an arrest. Personnel assigned to the SRT will engage in training and readiness exercises, as conducted by the department. Documentation of such training will be recorded by the SRT Commander and retained by the Training Division.

2. If it is determined the SRT may be needed, the on-duty Officer-in-Charge (OIC) will notify the Chief of Police via the chain of command. The Chief of Police shall determine if the SRT will be activated. When circumstance allows, sufficient time should be given to the SRT Commander to organize and preplan, as best as possible.
3. When activated, the SRT Commander, or designee, will notify team members of the call-out at home or by cellular phone. The Communications Center will keep a list of the home or cellular phone numbers of all SRT members. The SRT Commander will keep this list up-to-date.
4. SRT Callouts
 - a. Situations in which the SRT may respond include, but are not limited to:
 - (1) Hostage situations in which a subject(s) holding one or more persons against their will with actual or implied use of force. This could be the result of a crime, domestic situation, or other incident;
 - (2) Barricaded subjects in which subject(s) have taken a position of confinement to avoid apprehension - The intent may be displayed through words or actions. All barricaded subjects shall be considered to be armed until proven otherwise;
 - (3) High-risk warrant service; search and arrest - Any preplanned arrest or search warrant situations where there is a probability the subject(s) will resist with the use of weapons;
 - (4) Crowd Problem – Any civil disturbance or crowd control problem where the use of organized tactics, gas munitions, or rescue/apprehension from the crowd is anticipated;
 - (5) Sniper Situation – Subject(s) who has placed themselves in a position with a firearm, or has implied they have a firearm and fires upon or threatens to fire upon anyone;
 - (6) Mutual aid to other agencies;
 - (7) Dignitary protection – An assignment in which SRT members take positions of advantage to observe an area where a dignitary will appear, so that any possible threat to the dignitary may be recognized and eliminated; or
 - (8) Rapid Response – An immediate response by the initial officers on the scene to isolate and stop the actions of an active aggressor.

b. Warrant Services

1. All search warrants must have a "Threat Assessment" completed before the service of the warrant unless exigent circumstances exist for immediate service.
 2. Any preplanned operation involving a felony arrest warrant should have a Threat Assessment completed before warrant service whenever practicable.
 3. Copies of all completed Threat Assessments shall be forwarded to the SRT Commander, or designee, within 24 hrs of warrant service. Copies should include a copy of the warrant (or NCIC hit confirmation), the suspect criminal history, and any other pertinent information used in completing the Threat Assessment.
5. SRT members are primarily delegated to duty within their respective Divisions and Units for daily assignments. The SRT will act as a unit detached from ordinary responsibilities, upon the direction of the Chief of Police.
 6. Upon arrival of the department's SRT to a situation in which the department holds primary jurisdiction, the SRT Commander will take authority in the deployment of personnel and the assessment of a plan of action. The ranking department authority will be consulted, when possible, to ensure that all concerns are taken into account.
 - a. In situations where the SRT is called to act as assistance to an outside authority or to act in a "standby" capacity, the SRT's ranking officer will not supersede the authority of the requesting agency unless it is determined that the department's SRT will take responsibility for resolving the situation. If such a decision is made, the SRT Commander will take authority in the deployment of personnel and the assessment of a plan of action.

B. SELECTION PROCESS

The selection process for the SRT team is a rigorous process that is intended to produce the best-qualified applicants for selection as team members. The selection process described herein is designed to define the selection procedures for the department's SRT.

1. VACANCY NOTICE

- a. When the SRT Commander authorizes the filling of the department's SRT, a vacancy notice must be posted.
- b. When vacancies occur, the SRT Commander's responsibilities will include:
 - 1) Following the formal SRT selection guidelines that are described herein.
 - 2) Ensuring that all candidates are notified of final decisions as soon as practical.
- c. Any officer applying to the SRT will first submit an interoffice memorandum to the SRT Commander.

- d. The officer will then be given an application form to be completed and returned to the SRT Commander.

2. QUALIFICATIONS

- a. A minimum of one year of service with the department as of the closing date of the vacancy notice.
- b. Although participation in the selection process is voluntary, those choosing to participate must attend all phases of the process at the times and places specified to be considered for selection.
- c. Applicants must be self-motivated, possess a positive attitude, and be able to perform in stressful situations.
- d. Applicants must be in good physical condition, possess agility skills, and not suffer from acrophobia, an abnormal fear of high places.
- e. The applicant should possess the ability to interact with others in the achievement of team goals in high-stress situations.
- f. Applicants must be willing to be placed on an on-call status and report to work in emergencies, where little or no advance notice is given, as assigned and determined by the SRT Commander.
- g. Applicants must have a basic knowledge of the SRT's function.

3. SELECTION PROCESS FOR SRT MEMBERS

- a. The multi-faceted selection process is designed to standardize the methods by which candidates are selected for the SRT Team's Reaction Unit and Sniper/Counter Sniper Unit. This process will include:
 - b. Phase #1 – Written Test
 - c. Phase #2 - Application Board - Panel Interview

- 1) The application board will consist of three members. These members will be selected by the SRT Commander. The board members will consist of two current SRT members and one SRT Team Leader or Squad Leader. The members of the board will be approved by the Chief of Police.

- (a) Factors on which candidates will be evaluated may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- i. Job-related skills;
- ii. Ability to follow directions;
- iii. Detail retention;
- iv. Judgment;
- v. Motivation for the position; and
- vi. Supervisor's evaluation report.

- (b) Each board member will be allowed to award up to 30 points per candidate for a total of 90 points.
- (c) The SRT Commander will have ten (10) points per candidate.

d. Phase #3 - Physical Fitness Test

- i. Each candidate will participate in a physical fitness test designed to test the candidate's physical ability to perform job-related functions.
- ii. Applicants must complete and pass a physical agility assessment for consideration as a member of the SRT Team. The SRT Commander will also have the authority to utilize any job-related, stress-inducing agility and fitness assessments, such as the Cooper Institute For Aerobic Research standards as utilized by the Rhode Island Municipal Police Academy, the Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT) or other similar, standardized assessment models.
- iii. This is a pass-or-fail phase.

e. Phase #4 - Firearms Proficiency Test

- i. There are two courses of fire. Candidates are tested for accuracy during a standard combat qualification course and then tested for their accuracy, judgment, and decision-making under stressful conditions.
- ii. Both course scores will be totaled for one complete score for this phase.
- iii. This is a pass-or-fail phase.

- f. Before selecting a strongly recommended candidate for the SRT, the Chief of Police reserves the right to interview any or all of the candidates at their discretion. The Chief of Police may also review both the personnel performance records, personnel folder, and Internal Affairs folder (if applicable) of the candidate before selection.
- g. Candidates selected for the department's SRT will then be placed on probationary status for a one (1) year period. Newly selected SRT members must abide by both the rules and regulations of the department and of the SRT. Upon successful completion of the one (1) year probationary period, the member will be placed on permanent status with the department's SRT.
- h. Any changes in this SRT selection process must be approved by the SRT Commander with the final approval by the Chief of Police.

4. THE SELECTION PROCESS FOR THE CRISIS NEGOTIATIONS TEAM

The selection process for the Crisis Negotiation Team shall only consist of an "Application Board - Panel Interview".

a. Application Board - Panel Interview

- i. The application board will consist of three members. These members will be selected by the SRT Commander in conjunction with the lead Crisis Negotiator as identified by the SRT Commander. The board members will consist of one current SRT member, one SRT Team Leader or Squad Leader, and one member of the Crisis Negotiation Team. The members of the board will be approved by the Chief of Police.
- ii. Factors on which candidates will be evaluated may include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - (a) Job-related skills;
 - (b) Ability to follow directions;
 - (c) Detail retention;
 - (d) Judgment;
 - (e) Motivation for the position; and
 - (f) Supervisor's evaluation report.
- b. Department members who have been selected to attend advanced Crisis Negotiation or Hostage Negotiation training and have completed said course may be added to the Crisis Negotiation Team without a formal interview process.

C. TEAM CONFIGURATION

- 1. Members of the SRT are under the control of the SRT Commander. The SRT will consist of the following:
 - a. A Team Leader appointed by the SRT Commander.
 - b. The overall SRT configuration is divided into four units:
 - i. Reaction Unit
 - i. Overseen by the Team Leader and divided equally into two "Squads," identified as Squad A and Squad B.
 - ii. Each Squad will be overseen by a Squad Leader and an Assistant Squad Leader.
 - iii. Each Squad will have personnel specifically designated for particular functions (i.e. arrest team, shield, breacher, medic, etc.) as determined by the SRT Commander and SRT Team Leader.
 - ii. Sniper/ Observer Unit
 - i. Overseen by the Sniper Team Leader.
 - iii. Crisis Negotiation Unit
 - i. Overseen by the lead Crisis Negotiator as identified by the SRT Commander.
 - iv. Team Medics
- 2. The SRT Commander shall designate one unit supervisor for each unit. This member will hold the rank of sergeant or above.

D. PERSONNEL RESPONSIBILITIES

1. SRT Commander:

- a. Is the team supervisor and is ultimately responsible for any decisions or actions that the team makes.
- b. Plans SRT operations with the assistance of the SRT Team Leader.
- c. Will keep the Patrol OIC advised of the options available to them at any given time.
- d. Responsible for overseeing the training and equipping of team members.
- e. Will ensure that the training sessions follow the mission of the SRT Team and comply with the department's goals and objectives as well as standards set forth by the Rhode Island Tactical Officers Association (RITOA).

2. SRT Team Leader:

- a. The Team Leader will be responsible for tactical command among the SRT element during the execution of an assigned mission.
- b. Responsible for executing team training and monitoring equipment needs of team members.
- c. Assumes the responsibilities of the SRT Commander in their absence.

3. SRT Squad Leader:

- a. Appointed by the SRT Commander.
- b. Will be responsible for supervising the actions of the subordinate members of their squad.
- c. In their absence will be temporarily replaced by the Assistant Squad Leader or a senior member of the SRT.
- d. Will ensure that their designated squad members are prepared to conduct tactical operations.
- e. Will be responsible for leading their designated squad into a high-threat mission or operation.

4. Team Members:

- a. Responsible for the execution of orders as given by the SRT Commander, Team Leader, and Squad Leaders
- b. Be aware of and follow the methods and guidelines in the "SRT Operational Procedures" and "General Policies and Procedures"; and
- c. Should always attempt to contribute to the successful mission of the SRT.

5. Team Medics:

- a. Responsible for providing first aid and frontline trauma care in possible hostile environments; and
- b. Be aware of and follow the methods and guidelines in the "SRT Operational Procedures" and "General Policies and Procedures."

E. TRAINING 6.10

1. All personnel assigned to the SRT and all command and executive personnel who oversee tactical operations will engage in training as specified in the current RITOA Tactical Team Training Standards.
2. All SRT members will be required to complete a certified basic SWAT course within 12 months of their appointment to the SRT team. Crisis negotiators must complete a certified Hostage Negotiators or Crisis Negotiation course within 12 months of their appointment. Technical Support members have no prescribed mandatory training requirements.
3. Additionally, monthly training exercises will be conducted and all SRT members must attend unless excused by the SRT Commander or a designee. Additionally, any sniper unit member will receive an additional eight (8) hours of training specific to their primary role monthly. Members who are absent from training, or who arrive late/leave early due to department-related duties will notify the SRT Commander or Team Leader and advise of the circumstances necessitating the absence. Members who fail to attend training and whom the SRT Commander has not excused will be deemed absent without leave.

F. EQUIPMENT

1. It will be the responsibility of the SRT Commander to ensure that each SRT member is equipped with special equipment and proper protection.
2. The SRT Team Leader, or designee, will maintain an inventory of all special equipment assigned to each SRT member. The inventory will be maintained by the SRT Team Leader or designee.
3. SRT members are responsible for the condition of the equipment issued to them and for its storage in an accessible location.

G. TEAM MEMBER STATUS

1. Team members will fall into one of the following categories:
 - a. Active Status— Team members meet all physical/firearms qualifications and can perform duties relating to SRT. Active members may be on probation; and
 - b. Inactive Status— Team members, due to inability to meet the physical/firearms qualifications, are unable to perform duties relating to SRT. Inactive members will turn in all issued SRT firearms and equipment, except for the uniforms. An inactive status is not a continuous status. It is designed to assist members who have suffered injury or other circumstances. If it becomes evident that the team member is either unable or unwilling to meet the qualifications, then the team member may be dismissed from the team.

H. DISMISSAL FROM THE SRT

The mission of the SRT is to protect, serve, and ensure public safety. This mission is accomplished through superior training, superior equipment/weapons, and superior numbers. In other words, SRT is successful when trained, equipped, and available personnel staff it. The authority to dismiss team members from SRT rests with the SRT Commander. If a team member has failed to meet minimum qualifications, or it

has been determined that the team member is to be dismissed from the team for any reason, the SRT Commander, or designee, will immediately notify that team member. Disciplinary action will be reviewed by a committee of at least three members of the SRT and will make a recommendation as to the consequences based upon the totality of all circumstances.

Team members may be dismissed from the team for the following reasons:

1. Failure to meet physical fitness requirements;
2. Failure to respond to SRT activations;
3. Failure of personnel to pass SRT and department firearms qualifications;
4. Unexcused absences from training sessions;
5. Team members may be dismissed from the team because of disciplinary action that has been taken against the team member from within the department. Team members must immediately report in writing any disciplinary actions they have received. The SRT Commander, assistant commander, and team leaders will conduct an independent review of the disciplinary action to determine the member's team status;
6. Team members may be dismissed from the team because of poor performance/conduct in their normal work assignment; or
7. Team members may be dismissed from the team upon the recommendation of team leaders.

V. ATTACHMENTS

Threat Assessment for Warrant Service form

Per order,

Thomas F. Oates, III

Chief of Police

Written directives published within PowerDMS are in full force and effect on the referenced dates and have been approved by the Chief of Police.