



CLEVELAND DIVISION OF POLICE

GENERAL POLICE ORDER



EFFECTIVE DATE: OCTOBER 14, 2025	CHAPTER: 4 - Field Operations	PAGE: 1 of 3	NUMBER: 4.02.01
SUBJECT: SPECIAL WEAPONS AND TACTICS UNIT			
CHIEF: <i>Dorothy A. Todd, Chief</i>			

Substantive changes are italicized

PURPOSE: To set guidelines for the use of the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Unit.

POLICY: **It is the policy of the Cleveland Division of Police** to use the Incident Command System to manage critical incidents involving the SWAT Unit.

DEFINITIONS:

Incident Commander (IC) - *the supervisor responsible for all incident activities, including the development of strategies and tactics and the ordering and release of resources. The IC has overall authority and responsibility for conducting incident operations and is responsible for the management of all operations at the incident site. Responsibilities of the IC can be assumed by any officer from the officer handling the original call up to the Police Chief and any additional qualified officers, depending on the officers on scene, the size, scope and complexity of the incident or event.*

Incident Command System (ICS) - *a standardized on scene emergency management system that provides for the adoption of an integrated organizational structure. ICS is the combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure, designed to aid in the management of resources during incidents.*

PROCEDURES:

- I. Criteria for utilizing the SWAT Unit
 - A. *The BSS Commander or their designee shall approve the use of the SWAT Unit in the following situations:*
 1. Barricaded suspects armed or suspected to be armed.
 2. Suicidal persons armed or suspected to be armed.
 3. Hostage incidents.
 4. Sniper attacks.
 5. Incidents involving gang violence if gang members are suspected of being armed.
 6. High-risk felony warrant service *if* there is a strong indication of armed resistance.
 7. Crowd control where there is the potential of civil disturbance (e.g., riots, unlawful obstructions or assemblages, etc.).

PAGE: 2 of 3	SUBJECT: SPECIAL WEAPONS AND TACTICS UNIT	NUMBER: 4.02.01
-----------------	--	--------------------

8. *Orders to deploy less-lethal ammunition during crowd control incidents as directed by the Chief of Police*
 - a. *The commander of the Bureau of Special Services shall order the deployment of less-lethal ammunitions, on the scene of barricade/hostage incidents.*
9. A commander or superior officer believes the SWAT Unit has an advantage in resolving an incident due to their specialized training or equipment (i.e., intermediate weapons, chemical munitions, etc.).
10. *As outlined in related Division directives (i.e., General Police orders, Dignitary Protection and Incident Action Plans, and the SWAT Unit manual).*

II. Emergency SWAT Unit Response

A. Requesting SWAT

1. Incident Commanders shall notify the Communications Control Section (CCS) for an emergency SWAT Unit response.
2. *CCS shall contact the Commander of the BSS or designee for approval.*

B. Before the arrival of SWAT, the incident commander shall:

1. **Ensure that personnel have adequate cover and concealment for officer safety.**
2. Establish perimeter control to restrict the movement of suspects and ensure the safety of persons.
3. Use the ICS to maintain the appropriate span of control.
4. Relay observations to CCS radio dispatchers.
5. Inform responding officers of safe approach routes.
6. Establish access and egress routes, *including a clear pathway to Fire and EMS's target location in the event their services are needed (i.e., injured persons, fire, hazardous materials, etc.).*
7. Designate a staging area outside of the perimeter.
8. The on-scene supervisor shall allocate resources to ensure the prompt initiation and preparation of search warrants related to the event. (i.e., a search warrant for evidence of the suspected crime for which the subject is barricaded. A search warrant for a subject with a confirmed felony warrant in a third-party residence.)

C. Upon the arrival of the Commander of BSS and/or the SWAT Unit OIC, the incident commander shall:

PAGE: 3 of 3	SUBJECT: SPECIAL WEAPONS AND TACTICS UNIT	NUMBER: 4.02.01
-----------------	--	--------------------

1. *Relinquish IC responsibilities to the BSS Commander and/or SWAT Unit OIC by briefing them on all available information. (The initial IC now becomes the on-scene supervisor).*
2. *Command the outer perimeter and relinquish command of the inner perimeter to the SWAT Unit OIC.*
3. Provide support requested by the OIC of the SWAT Unit.

D. The incident commander shall direct the completion of necessary reports.

1. The unit initially assigned shall make arrests, seize evidence, conduct evidentiary searches, transport arrestees, and complete incident reports.
2. Incident commanders may delegate these tasks.

III. Non-Emergency Requests for SWAT Unit Assistance

A. Requesting SWAT.

1. Supervisors may request SWAT for non-emergency situations by contacting the Officer-in-Charge of the SWAT Unit or through CCS.
2. *The SWAT Unit OIC shall forward the pertinent information for the non-emergency request to the BSS Commander for final approval.*

B. For *planned events where SWAT Unit assistance may be required*, the Chief may designate an incident commander as part of an Incident Action Plan; the incident commander shall:

1. Establish a command post and staging area for prolonged operations.
2. Provide parking and security for police, fire, and emergency medical service vehicles and equipment.

IV. SWAT Unit Responsibilities

A. *The SWAT Unit shall respond as approved by the Commander of BSS or designee.*

B. The SWAT Unit shall cooperate with investigative personnel and provide statements, reports, and testimony as required.

THIS ORDER SUPERSEDES ANY PREVIOUSLY ISSUED DIRECTIVE OR POLICY FOR THIS SUBJECT AND WILL REMAIN EFFECTIVE UNTIL RESCINDED OR SUPERSEDED.