

Georgia Department of Public Safety Policy Manual

SUBJECT ACTIVATION OF THE STATE OF GEORGIA DIVE TEAM	POLICY NUMBER 25.15
DISTRIBUTION ALL EMPLOYEES	DATE 10/19/2022
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25.15.1 Purpose

It is the purpose of this policy to establish uniform guidelines for the activation of the State of Georgia Special Operations Dive Team. Appropriate procedures are required to be followed to ensure that the activation is in accordance with the mission of the Dive Team.

25.15.2 Policy

It is the policy of the Georgia Department of Public Safety (DPS) that the activation of the Dive Team takes precedence over all other assignments. DPS personnel assigned to the Dive Team become subordinates to the Dive Team Commander, upon activation for required duties, until the Dive Team Commander determines that the activation is over.

25.15.3 Titles, Definitions, Chain of Command

For this policy, the following titles and definitions apply:

- A. The Georgia State Patrol Field Operations South Adjutant (“South Adjutant”) shall be the limited appointing authority for the Dive Team.
- B. The Dive Team Commander shall be the manager of the Dive Team, have responsibility for the overall standards and procedures associated with the Dive Team, and shall report to the Troop K Commander.
- C. Dive Team - consists of DPS sworn members trained and certified as a Public Safety Divers, certified to Departmental standards.
- D. Dive Supervisor – Senior Dive Team members who have completed a Department sponsored PADI Divemaster course.

25.15.4 Procedures

- A. Operational Structure

The Dive Team is comprised of a Team Public Information Officer (PIO), Dive Team Members, and Dive Team Medics.

- B. Authority to Activate Dive Team

1. The Dive Team is available, with the approval of the Dive Team Commander, or their designee, to the Department of Public Safety or any requesting law enforcement agency in the State of Georgia.
2. The Dive Team Commander, or their designee has the authority to immediately activate the Dive Team for any incident within jurisdictional boundaries. They also have the authority to deny the activation of the Dive Team upon evaluating a request.

C. When Activation is Applicable:

1. DPS personnel should request the assistance of the Dive Team in planning and conducting operations in response to an applicable incident.

Applicable incidents include:

- a. Evidence Recovery - The systematic search and recovery of any inanimate object for evidentiary purposes.
- b. Victim/Body Recovery – The systematic search and recovery of a possible victim or victims in a waterborne environment.
- c. Underwater Crime Scene Investigation/Documentation – The procedural investigation and documentation of a crime scene underwater; to include photography, video, and geographical documentation.
- d. Security/Threat Assessment – A waterborne survey assessing the integrity of a designated location or structure for security purposes.
- e. Special Assignments – Any assignment, approved by the Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety or his designee, based upon the incident level or the need for special expertise.

D. Requesting Dive Team Activation

1. When a request for the team is from a law enforcement agency external to the Department of Public Safety, it shall be forwarded immediately to the Headquarters Communication Center.
 - a. The Headquarters Communication Center shall ensure that they obtain the information of the requesting agency including the contact details of the individual making the request.
 - b. The Headquarters Communication Center shall notify the Dive Commander or their designee, who shall determine whether the situation warrants the activation of the team.
 - c. If the team is activated, the Headquarters Communication Center shall notify the South Adjutant, Troop Officer and Post NCO responsible for the area in which the incident has occurred.
2. When a request for the team is received from within the Department, the Dive Commander or their designee shall contact the Headquarters Communication Center.
 - a. The Headquarters Communication Center shall ensure that they obtain the information of the requesting Troop/Region Commander including the relevant contact details.

- b. The Headquarters Communication Center shall notify the Dive Commander or their representative who shall determine whether the situation warrants the activation of the team.
- c. If the team is activated, the Headquarters Communication Center shall notify the South Adjutant, Troop Commander, and Post Commander responsible for the area in which the incident is occurring.

E. Standard Operating Procedures for Dive Team Activation

- 1. In the event of a Dive Team Activation:
 - a. The member receiving the call shall notify the Dive Team Commander or their designee.
 - b. The Dive Team Commander, or their designee, shall notify the Headquarters Communication Center, and affected Dive Team members.
- 2. An activation of the Dive Team shall include all available members of the Team. Only the Dive Team Commander, or their designee can decide to activate a limited number of the Dive Team members.
- 3. Each Dive Team member shall report to the call out location as soon as possible.

F. Preparation Prior to the Arrival of the Dive Team

In order to ensure a coordinated effort with minimum expenditure of time, the following preparations shall be made by the on-scene supervisor prior to the arrival of the Dive Team:

- 1. Establish the following:
 - a. Location of the inner perimeter/area of operation;
 - b. Command Post;
 - c. Staging area, and
 - d. Media area.
- 2. Obtain as much applicable information as possible about the incident, including witness statements, last scene point, name, and physical description, if incident is for victim/body recovery.
- 3. For evidentiary incidents gather witnesses/suspect's statements, description, composition, and suspected area of location.
- 4. For victim/body recovery and evidentiary incidents, obtain if possible, witness contact information. A Dive Team member, if reasonably practicable, should conduct interviews of witnesses and/or suspects for pertinent information.
- 5. Gather all pertinent information to provide a concise and organized briefing to the Dive Team Commander or his/her designee.

G. Availability for Duty

1. It may be necessary to call out a Dive Team member while they are off-duty. Dive Team members shall not respond to a call out if they have any detectable amount of intoxicants in their system at the time of the activation. The member shall immediately notify the Dive Team Commander of this fact and that they are not currently available for duty.
2. Dive Team members who are unavailable for call outs due to vacations, compensatory time off, schools, midnight shifts, etc., shall notify their respective Team Leader. Team members shall also advise their Team Leader of expected departure and return dates.
3. If a significant proportion of the Dive Team is unavailable, the Dive Team Commander shall notify the Troop K Commander.

H. Call-Out Status

The Dive Team may be placed on stand-by at the discretion of the Dive Commander or their designee. Stand-by refers to a state of readiness to be activated where the immediate preparations to respond have been made.