

# Georgia Department of Public Safety

## Policy Manual

SUBJECT <b>ACTIVATION OF THE STATE OF GEORGIA SWAT TEAM</b>	POLICY NUMBER <b>25.02</b>
DISTRIBUTION <b>ALL EMPLOYEES</b>	DATE REVISED <b>4/21/2015</b>

### 25.02.1 Purpose

It is the purpose of this policy to establish uniform guidelines for the activation of the State of Georgia Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team. Appropriate procedures are required to be followed to ensure that the activation is in accordance with the mission of the SWAT Team.

### 25.02.2 Policy

It is the policy of the Georgia Department of Public Safety (DPS) that the activation of the SWAT Team takes precedence over all other assignments within the GSP. The DPS troopers assigned to the SWAT Team become subordinates to the Tactical Team Commander until the Tactical Team Commander determines that the activation is over.

### 25.02.3 Procedures

#### A. Operational Structure

The team is comprised of a Tactical Team, a Crisis Negotiation Team (CNT), Support Personnel and Tactical Medics. The Organizational Chart of the SWAT Team is attached as Exhibit 25.02-1.

#### B. Authority to Activate SWAT Team

1. The SWAT Commander, or if unavailable, the Tactical Team Commander, or their designee has the authority to immediately activate the team for any critical incident within jurisdictional boundaries. They also have the authority to deny the activation of the team upon evaluating a request.
2. The SWAT Team is available, with the approval of the SWAT Commander, or if unavailable, the Tactical Team Commander, or their designee, to the DPS or any requesting law enforcement agency in the State of Georgia.

#### C. When Activation is Required

1. Units of the Department should request the assistance of the SWAT Team in planning and conducting operations in response to a critical incident. Critical incidents include:
  - a. Hostage Situations - The holding of any person(s) against their will by an armed or potentially armed suspect.

- b. Barricaded Situations - The standoff created by an armed or potentially armed suspect in any location, whether fortified or not, who is refusing to comply with police demands for surrender.
- c. Sniper Situations - The firing upon citizens and or police by an armed suspect, whether stationary or mobile.
- d. Apprehension - The arrest or apprehension of armed or potentially armed suspect(s) where there is the likelihood of armed resistance.
- e. Personal Protection - The security of special persons, such as VIP's, witnesses, or suspects, based on threat or potential threat to the well being of those persons.
- f. Active Shooter Situations - One or more subjects who participate in a random or systematic shooting spree, demonstrating their intent to continuously harm others. Their overriding objective appears to be that of mass murder, rather than other criminal conduct such as robbery, hostage taking, etc.
- g. Special Assignments - Any assignment, approved by the Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety or his designee, based upon the threat level or the need for special expertise.

2. Warrants – Units of the Department:

- a. Should reference the matrix in Exhibit 25.02-2 of this policy to determine the risk level of a warrant;
- b. Should request the assistance of the SWAT Team in planning and conducting the execution of high-risk warrants;
- c. May request assistance for medium-risk warrants, and
- d. Need not request assistance for low risk warrants.

D. Availability for Duty

- 1. It may be necessary to call-out a SWAT Team member while they are off-duty. SWAT 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 Element Leader of this fact and that they are not currently available for duty.
- 2. SWAT 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 Element Leader of expected departure and return dates.
- 3. If a significant proportion of any element is unavailable, the relevant Element Leader shall notify the Tactical Team Commander.

E. Preparation Prior to the Arrival of the SWAT 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 SWAT Team:

1. Establish the following:
  - a. Location of the inner perimeter;
  - b. Outer perimeter;
  - c. Command post;
  - d. Staging area, and
  - e. Media area.
2. Obtain as much information as possible about the suspect(s), including name, physical description, military background, areas of specialized expertise and mental state. A criminal record check should be made to determine previous use of violence and if the suspect is wanted.
3. Obtain, if possible, first hand information concerning all locations involved. A diagram of these locations should be prepared showing entrances, exits, windows, inside rooms, adjacent buildings, and any additional information about the location that might prove useful to the team, e.g. weapons, dogs, security devices, etc.
4. Be prepared to provide a briefing to the Tactical Team Leader.

F. Requesting SWAT Team Activation

1. When a request for the team is received by a law enforcement agency external to DPS, it shall be forwarded immediately to the Headquarters Communication Center.
  - a. The Communication Center shall ensure that they obtain the particulars of the requesting agency including the contact details of the individual making the request.
  - b. The Communication Center shall notify the SWAT Commander or their representative who shall determine whether the situation warrants the activation of the team.
  - c. If the team is activated, the Communication Center shall notify the Commanding Officer, Troop Officer and Post NCO responsible for the area in which the incident is occurring.
2. When a request for the team is received from within the DPS, the Troop/Region Commander or their representative shall contact the Headquarters Communication Center.
  - a. The Communication Center shall ensure that they obtain particulars of the requesting Troop/Region Commander including the relevant contact details.
  - b. The Communication Center shall notify the SWAT Commander or their representative who shall determine whether the situation warrants the activation of the team.

- c. If the team is activated, the Communication Center shall notify the Commanding Officer and Post Commander responsible for the area in which the incident is occurring.

G. Standard Procedures for Team Activation

1. In the event of a SWAT Team activation:
  - a. The member receiving the call shall notify the Tactical Team Commander or Acting Tactical Team Commander;
  - b. The Tactical Team Commander or Acting Tactical Team Commander shall notify the Headquarters Communication Center, and
  - c. The Headquarters Communication Center shall notify affected team members by the current paging system.
2. Upon activation of the SWAT Team, the Headquarters Communication Center shall use the "command page" to notify the:
  - a. Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety;
  - b. Lieutenant Colonel (Deputy Commissioner);
  - c. Commanding Officer;
  - d. Troop Commanders, and
  - e. Director, Public Information Office.
  - f. Tactical Medics
  - g. Support Personnel
3. An activation of the SWAT Team shall include all available members of the Team. Only the SWAT Commander, or if unavailable, the Tactical Team Commander, or their designee can decide to activate a limited number of Team members.
4. Each SWAT Team member shall report to the call out location as soon as possible.

H. Call-Out Status

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