

1.3.1 [B] Special Emergency Response Team (S.E.R.T)

I. POLICY

It is the policy of the Johnstown Police Departments team members that are on the Johnstown/Richland Police S.E.R.T. Team to support the City of Johnstown and Richland Township as well as any other requesting law enforcement agency with a tactical response to critical incidents. To establish the governing regulations in the selection, training, equipping and use of the Johnstown/Richland Police S.E.R.T. Team.

II. PURPOSE

Recognizing that the presence of highly trained, highly skilled police tactical unit has been shown to substantially reduce the risk of injury or loss of life to citizens, police officers and suspects. Recognizing that a well managed team response to critical incidents usually results in successful resolution of critical incidents; it is the intent of the Johnstown/Richland Police S.E.R.T. Team to provide a highly trained and skilled tactical team as a resource for the Johnstown/Richland Police Departments in the handling of critical incidents.

III. DEFINITIONS

A. Critical incidents are defined as follows:

1. Hostage Situations: the holding of any person[s] against their will by an armed or potentially armed suspect.
2. Barricaded Situations: the stand-off 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.
3. Sniper Situations: the firing upon citizens and/or police by an armed suspect, whether stationary or mobile.
4. High-Risk Apprehension: the arrest or apprehension of armed or potentially armed suspect[s] where the likelihood of armed resistance is high.
5. High-Risk Warrant Service: the service of search or arrest warrants where the Chief of Police or his/her designee or where policy recommends or requires the use of the S.E.R.T. Team.

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6. 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 these persons.
7. Special Assignments: any assignment, approved by the S.E.R.T. Commander, based upon a high level of threat.
8. Covert Entry: a slow methodical search in order to locate and apprehend suspects.
9. Dynamic Entry: a deliberate, fast paced flow for the purpose of rescue and preventing injury or harm to prisoners, innocent bystanders and law enforcement officers.

IV. PROCEDURE

The Johnstown Police team members on the Johnstown/Richland Police S.E.R.T. Team will be comprised of a Primary Entry Team, a Support/ Arrest Team, Long Rifle/Observer Teams and Crisis Negotiators. Members of the S.E.R.T. Team may at the discretion of the S.E.R.T. commander and the Chiefs of Police, be crossed trained to fulfill any or all of the individual positions in the Team. Each individual team will be comprised of the following personnel whom have the duties described below:

A. Primary Entry Team

1. Should be at least five members, with the following personnel:
 - a. Team Leader with below duties:
 - i. Co-ordinates and supervises activities of element.
 - ii. Co-ordinates tactical operations of element to include planning, deployment, movement, entry, search and clear.
 - b. Scout-assistant team leader
 - i. Leads/directs team and reconnoiters area to be cleared.
 - ii. Acts in the capacity of assistant team leader.
 - iii. Conducts searches of designated areas.
 - iv. Provides cover for team elements as necessary.
 - v. Will assume other duties as directed by the Team Leader.
 - c. Rear guard and additional team members
 - i. Provides security/cover for element during movement.
 - ii. Conducts searches of designated areas.
 - iii. Is on the entry team.

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iv. May deploy diversion/chemical agents.

B. Arrest and Support Team

1. Will be comprised of the remaining personal that, due to the situation, are not selected by the S.E.R.T. Commander to be a part of the Primary Entry Team.
 - a. Team Leader
 - i. Co-ordinates and supervises activities of element.
 - ii. Co-ordinates tactical operations of element, at the direction of the S.E.R.T. Commander, to include: planning, deployment, movement, observation, inner perimeter security and arrest.
 - b. Diversionary/Chemical Agent Deployment Personnel
 - i. Observe target location for activity.
 - ii. Deploy Diversionary/Chemical Agents at the direction of either the S.E.R.T. Commander or the Support Team Leader.
 - iii. Provide cover for the Entry Team.
 - c. Arrest Team
 - i. Observe target location for activity.
 - ii. Responsible for the arrest and search of suspect if directed by the S.E.R.T. Commander or Support Team leader.
 - iii. Provide cover for the Teams deployed in the area of the target location.

C. Long Rifle/Observer Team

1. May be comprised of two members per team
 - a. Provides cover for scouting element and other teams deployed in the target location.
 - b. Has responsibility to neutralize life-endangering threats.
 - c. Observe target location for activity.
 - d. Provide intelligence gathering

D. Incident Commander

1. Decide the number of team members to activate.
1. Responsible for the placement of the Tactical Operations Center [TOC].

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2. Determines the placement personnel such as, but not limited to:
 - a. Containment personnel
 - b. Long rifle positions
3. Gathers information i.e.:
 - a. Witnesses, suspect[s], hostage information, etc.

F. S.E.R.T. Commander

A S.E.R.T. Commander commands the Johnstown/Richland Police S.E.R.T. Team. When activated for an operation, the S.E.R.T. Commander, or the Acting Commander when the Commander is absent, reports directly to the Incident Commander, where one is designated or to the on-scene commander.

1. Responsible for the deployment of the S.E.R.T. Team, tactical decision-making and tactical resolution of the incident.
2. Responsible for containment or apprehension of suspect.
3. Is subordinate to the Incident Commander and the Chiefs of Police.
 - a. Only in terms of when and if the tactical option will be initiated not how it will be performed.
 - b. Only when the S.E.R.T. Commander relinquishes control to another person outside of S.E.R.T., no other person, who is not in leadership position will attempt to direct, supervise or control any element or member of the S.E.R.T. Team.
4. Will insure that only those Team members properly trained and certified in the use of the special equipment will utilize the equipment.
 - a. Will be responsible to authorize the use of a diversionary device with the exception involving an emergency reaction.
5. Will be responsible for establishing the training standards and criteria for the team.
6. Will cause a log of all incident reports on all S.E.R.T. operations and will also cause all planning or decision-making documents to be recorded. These documents will be stored and maintained in a file for ten [10] years.
7. Will cause an incident report to be generated detailing the activation and use of the team.
8. Will conduct an after action review.
9. Will annually review and when necessary update this policy.

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10. Under a Mutual Aid request:
 - a. Primary Assistance:
 - i. Shall respond to the scene and take charge of all personnel.
 - ii. Requesting agency must agree to this criteria or the S.E.R.T. Team will decline primary assistance.
 - b. Secondary Assistance:
 - i. Will respond to the scene and will accept mission assignments from the requesting agency.
 - ii. S.E.R.T. Team will remain intact and under the S.E.R.T. Team Commander.

G. Crisis Negotiator

The Crisis Negotiator during a critical incident considers the lives of hostages, civilians and law enforcement officers to be the priority. When possible, the negotiator resolves the incident peacefully through crisis negotiation. They develop and employ tactical alternatives in the event of a failed crisis negotiation.

1. May be utilized in a hostage situation, barricaded subject, potential suicide victim, etc.
2. Uses a non-violent law enforcement effort in which to utilize strategies and tactics to gain the voluntary surrender of a hostage-taker, barricaded subject, potential suicide victim, etc.
3. Assumes responsibility for all communications with the subject[s].
4. Assist the S.E.R.T Commander with assessing the critical incident and developing a recommended crisis negotiation strategy.
5. Establish and maintain a crisis negotiation operation center within the inner perimeter.
6. Ensure the crisis negotiation operation center is free of distraction and unauthorized personnel.
7. Coordinate with the S.E.R.T. Commander for the delivery of the specialized hostage telephone to the critical incident site.
8. Review plans, including photographs, diagrams or sketches, of the critical incident site.
9. Maintain a chronological record.
10. Maintain Incident Information Charts within the crisis negotiation operation center, which reflect the intelligence necessary to support the negotiation effort.

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11. Establish reliable communication with the Incident Coordinator and the S.E.R.T. Commander.
12. Coordinate with the S.E.R.T. Commander to determine the delivery, surrender and arrest plans.
13. Provide periodic updates to the S.E.R.T. Commander as necessary.
14. Request specialized personnel in support of the Negotiator if necessary, i.e.: interpreter.
15. Establish and maintain direct communication with the Tactical Teams in the event a tactical resolution becomes necessary.
16. Provide relevant intelligence to the S.E.R.T. Commander.
17. Develop, manage and follow-up investigative leads.
18. Develop a plan for continued negotiations in the event of protracted critical incident.
19. Interview and debrief hostages immediately following their release.

H. Patrol Sergeant or Officer in Command [OIC]

The ranking officer at the scene shall be in command until specifically relieved by a S.E.R.T. Commander.

1. Patrol Supervisor has the authority to immediately activate the S.E.R.T. Team for a critical incident.
 - a. Notify the Chief of Police or their designee.
2. Inform the tactical incident to the S.E.R.T. Commander.
3. The patrol supervisor will report directly to the Incident Commander.
4. Initial establishment of an inner and outer perimeter prior to S.E.R.T.'s arrival.
5. Responsible for establishing traffic and crowd control or instructed otherwise by the S.E.R.T. Commander.

I. Patrol Officers

Patrol officers confronting a critical incident shall not initiate tactical actions other than those necessary to protect the lives and safety of themselves or others consistent with this department's use of force policy.

1. Notify the patrol supervisor of the incident and circumstances.

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2. Contain and isolate the incident scene.
3. Establish an inner containment perimeter to provide a reasonable degree of safety.
4. Establish a containment perimeter to control pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

J. Detective Bureau

1. The bureau may request the assistance of the S.E.R.T. Team in planning or conducting appropriate operations.
2. The Detective Sergeant or his/her representative will contact the S.E.R.T. Team Commander with prior approval from the Chief of Police or his/her designee.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES/TRAINING OF THE S.E.R.T. TEAM

All S.E.R.T. policies pertaining to the Johnstown/Richland Police Department S.E.R.T. Team are separately bulleted in their entirety within this policy.

A. S.E.R.T policy #29: The Regulations of the Johnstown/Richland Police Department S.E.R.T. Team.

1. Mission Statement
2. Mission
3. Compositions and Structure
4. Commands and Control Structure
5. Activation Process
6. Selection Process
7. Training Standards
8. Equipment Standards
9. Mission Planning
10. Documentation of Activation
11. After Action Critique
12. Periodic Policy Review

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- B. S.E.R.T. policy #29A: S.E.R.T Team Call Out.
 - 1. Utilization & Guidelines
 - 2. Responsibilities
 - 3. Mutual Aid

- C. S.E.R.T policy #29A-1: S.E.R.T Responsibilities for Hostage/Barricaded Subject Incidents.
 - 1. Utilization & Guidelines
 - 2. Tactical Considerations
 - 3. Maintain Control of Responding Personnel
 - 4. Post Operation Considerations

- D. S.E.R.T. policy #29A-2: After Action Report.
 - 1. Completion and Submission of an After Action Report [AAR].

- E. S.E.R.T. policy #29A-4: Physical Fitness [PT]
 - 1. Training and PT Requirements

- F. S.E.R.T. policy #29A-5: Attendance of Scheduled Training
 - 1. Classified Mandatory Training
 - a. Exceptions noted.

- G. S.E.R.T. policy #29A-6: Use of Diversionary Devices
 - 1. Justification Use
 - 2. Deployment Considerations
 - 3. Authorization
 - 4. Authorized Team Members

- H. S.E.R.T. policy #29A-7: S.E.R.T. Discipline
 - 1. Governing Guidelines to All Team Members

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I. S.E.R.T. policy #29A-8: S.E.R.T. Weapons Qualification

1. Qualification and Standards for All Weapons for Team Members

- a. .40 Semi-Automatic Pistol
- b. Shield Drill
- c. Mask Firing
- d. Stress Fire
- e. Injured Officer
- f. Hostage Rescue
- g. AR-15
- h. Close Contact
- i. Transition
- j. Standard Drills
- k. Qualification Course
- l. 12 Gauge Shotguns
- m. Long Rifle Course
- n. H&K UMP .40 Caliber Submachine Guns
- o. Scoring

J. S.E.R.T. policy #29A-9: Crisis Negotiation Team

1. Operational Guidelines of Critical Incidents

K. S.E.R.T. policy #29 A-10: Use of Force

1. Utilization Guidelines
 - a. General Call Out
 - i. Ex: Act 64 violations
 - b. Search Warrants
 - c. Barricade
 - d. Hostage

Effective Date:

Date: March 16, 2007

By Order Of:

Craig Foust
Chief Of Police

