

WEBER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE POLICY AND PROCEDURES	
SUBJECT: Hostage Situations	CHAPTER/SECTION NO.:35.3
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35.3.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to Deputies and SWAT personnel responding to Hostage situations.

This policy is intended to supplement and comply with policy 35.1 (Weber Metro SWAT). It should provide a clear summary of the responsibilities of the responding patrol Deputies, SWAT operators, hostage negotiators and the incident commander with regard to hostage situations.

All general questions relating to the SWAT team and use of force, authorized equipment, investigations concerning a Deputies / officers use of deadly force etc. are answered in policy 35.1 “ Weber Metro SWAT .“

35.3.2 Rationale

The Sheriff's Office recognizes that scenarios involving hostage takers are highly volatile, potentially explosive situations that require a special response.

The use of well trained and properly equipped tactical team members and negotiators increases the likelihood of a positive outcome.

Hostage Takers have distinct motivations and require the use of diverse tactics by law enforcement to handle the situation.

Varying motivations behind hostage situations include; but are not limited to domestic violence, interdicted crime, prisoner escape, ransom, riots within correctional settings, and terrorist events.

This policy will focus on hostage situations occurring outside of correctional settings. For policy governing hostage situations within the corrections facilities see WCSO policy JF 06- Emergency Procedures.

35.3.3 Definitions

After Action Report: A brief internal report generated by senior members of the team after each operation and training event. The purpose of this report is to improve the teams operational capabilities through honest and objective introspection. Among its main components will be a section identifying who was present, a concise summary of the event, what went right, what went wrong and suggestions to correct any deficiencies. A copy of the A.A.R. format is attached to policy 35.1.

Assistant Squad Leader: The second in command of a squad sized element. This team member is responsible for assisting the squad leader run their element and is capable of assuming squad level command in the absence of the squad leader.

Breacher: A member of an entry squad trained in the techniques and tools used to gain entry into a structure.

Chemical Agents – Includes OC and CS. These are chemicals that are delivered by use of frangible projectiles, aerosol spray, smoke dispensing canisters and by other delivery systems. These chemicals cause irritation and physical discomfort intended to dissuade a combatant from continuing their aggressive behavior.

Containment: The ability to control who enters or exits from a specific area, such as the inner perimeter.

Deliberate Action: Actions taken against a suspect which have been carefully thought

out (specific to this event) and rehearsed.

Entry Squad: A squad sized element (up to 8 people) charged with being capable of making entry into a structure and performing tactical operations.

Flash Bang: Also referred to as a Noise Flash Diversion Device. A device which can be hand deployed or mounted to a “ Bang Stick “ which, when activated, produces a bright light and loud noise capable of temporarily overwhelming a person's senses. Typically used to distract or divert a person's attention in order to provide time and safety for the tactical element.

Hasty Rescue: An attempt to rescue hostages / victims from the violent, possibly deadly actions of the suspect, despite the fact that we do not have the benefit of detailed plans or time to gather additional personnel or equipment.

Hostage Rescue Operation: An operation in which one or more suspects, for whatever reason, are holding a person or persons against their will.

Immediate action: Necessary immediate intervention to the actions of the suspect.

Incident Commander (I.C.) : The officer in charge from the Law Enforcement agency having primary jurisdiction over the incident.

The incident commander has the burden of scene management, such as coordinating available resources, media inquiries, criminal investigations, and working closely with the tactical commander.

The Incident Commander's direct control over the tactical commander is limited to the decision to use the SWAT team or not. All tactical decisions, including the use of negotiations, marksmen or entry into a structure rest solely with the tactical commander.

Inner Perimeter: The highly dangerous area immediately surrounding the incident location. All non-SWAT officers, medical personnel and civilians must be excluded from this area unless under the direct control of a tactical team member. This area is usually the smallest area that we can effectively control and maintain containment of in order to control/mitigate the actions of the suspect.

Marksmen Squad: In addition to other tactical training, this squad is trained in the use of precision rifles and observation, including the tactics to utilize them properly.

Their primary responsibilities as listed in order of priority are;

1. To deliver an accurate round on the suspect as required throughout the incident.
2. Provide over watch
3. Provide real time intelligence information
4. Support the entry squads as needed

Negotiations Operations Center (N.O.C.) : A vehicle or location specified, equipped and restricted for use by members of the negotiations squad and tactical commanders.

Negotiations Squad: Members whose primary function is to make every effort to communicate with the suspect (s) in an attempt to bring about a peaceful resolution. They are not restricted to use in hostage situations.

Operations Officer: The “ assistant commander “. The person second in command of the team and who acts on behalf of the team commander during his / her absence.

Operations Order: A specifically formatted document describing a planned operation. It is a thought out, detailed and comprehensive plan that seeks to ensure a coordinated and controlled operation.

Outer Perimeter: That area of the incident site outside the inner perimeter which is restricted to police officers and fire / medical personnel only. The T.O.C. and N.O.C. are usually located in this area.

SWAT Commander: The person responsible for the day to day operations of the entire Team. His / her primary responsibilities include command during incidents, insuring the operational readiness of the unit, and maintaining the budget.

Squad Leader: A senior member who is responsible for the leadership of a squad.

Suicidal Subject: A person who has demonstrated a desire to end their own life.

Tactical Commander: This person has decision making authority and responsibility for the management of the tactical incident, including the use / continued use of negotiations, what tactics are used throughout the incident and if / when to end the incident through the use of a tactical option.

The Tactical Commander will be the highest ranking SWAT **tactical** officer on scene.

Tactical Operations Center (T.O.C.): The location of tactical command. The T.O.C is located within the outer perimeter. Entry to the T.O.C. is restricted to the command staff and those requested by the tactical commander.

35.3.4 Operating Philosophy

The Weber Metro SWAT Team operates with the basic philosophy that there are “ priorities of life “. While we would prefer to see a nonviolent resolution to all incidents, we realize that this decision lies strictly with the suspect (s) and is governed by his / her choices, actions and willingness to comply. It may be necessary and proper to end the life of a suspect in order to save the lives of hostages, officers or civilians.

Decisions made by the Tactical Commander will be governed by the philosophy that there is a priority of life. Those priorities of life, in order of highest priority to lowest, are as follows;

1. Hostages
2. Civilians / bystanders in the area
3. Police / SWAT
4. Suspects

35.3.5 Preferential Resolution Options

Understanding the “ priorities of life “ , knowing that the two most dangerous times for a hostage are 1) during “ first contact “ with the hostage taker and 2) during a tactical entry, then further realizing that the police response to a hostage situation is dictated heavily by the actions of the hostage taker (s) , the preferential options for a resolution are:

1. Negotiations
2. Marksmen (open air)
3. Vehicle assault
4. Stronghold assault
5. Combination (likely in all tactical intervention options)

35.3.6 Notification

Notification of a hostage incident will be made through the chain of command, as soon as feasible, by the on-duty Shift Supervisor.

35.3.7 Procedures

A) Responsibilities of the first Deputies on scene

1. Take immediate steps to ensure the protection of the hostage (s) and innocent persons in the area by:
 - a) Diverting Vehicular and pedestrian traffic away from the area
 - b) Establishing an inner perimeter
 - c) Safely, evacuating those persons in immediate danger. If not possible or practical, provide instructions to have them shelter in place until they can be safely evacuated.
 - i. Sheriff's Office personnel are duty- bound to evacuate seriously injured (but likely savable) persons when necessary, taking every reasonable precaution to prevent threats to their safety.
 - ii. If a Deputy believes that an evacuation of an injured person is unduly hazardous, they will communicate this to the incident commander so that responding SWAT members can plan for the evacuation of this individual upon their arrival.
 - iii. Injured victims will be turned over to emergency medical personnel as soon as possible for treatment and possibly transportation to a hospital.
 - iv. Bystanders / spectators will be removed from both the inner and outer perimeters whenever possible.
 - v. If necessary, the occupants of buildings either adjacent to or in the line of fire of, the incident location will be evacuated.
 - vi. Realizing that evacuations will likely be ongoing when SWAT arrives, and in order to reduce confusion, it is important that no evacuees, witnesses, bystanders or injured persons be brought to the Command Post, the Tactical Operations Center or the Negotiations Operations Center unless specifically requested.
2. Make every reasonable effort to contain the incident and prevent escape.
3. Establish and assume incident command until relieved by a Deputy of a higher rank.

4. Notify the on duty supervisor. Request their response to the scene and ask to have SWAT paged out.
5. Summon medical / fire personnel (even if no one has been injured to this point) and have them stage in the area.
6. Isolate all evacuated persons and witnesses in a common location until interviewers can arrive for identification and debriefing.
7. Direct responding units into the scene in a manner to avoid placing those units in jeopardy.
8. Brief the first arriving supervisor and assist him / her as necessary.
9. Communication with the hostage taker (s) may keep them distracted and provide a measure of safety for the hostage. Dialogue with the hostage taker is encouraged, but the Deputy must be cautious not to provoke the suspect (s) or cause aggression towards the hostage, and should;
 - a) Remain in a safe or protected position
 - b) Be aware that the initial phase of most incidents is the most volatile, but that situational stress should decrease with time.
 - c) Utilize all reasonable means to defuse the situation.
 - d) Expect the subject to want to verbally vent his/her frustration, anger, or concerns. **DO NOT** let the subject provoke you into a verbal argument.
 - e) When appropriate, engage the suspect in non-threatening conversation, and encourage him/her to tell you what the “problem” is.
 - f) Gather as much intelligence as possible, i.e. weapons, physical condition of subject, source of subjects problems, other persons involved, number of as well as the location and condition of the hostage (s), etc. then brief other deputies / supervisors and SWAT personnel when they arrive.
 - g) Avoid making promises. If these are not kept it could provoke hostility towards the hostages.

B) Responsibilities of the shift supervisor / O.I.C.

1. Assume incident command of the scene until relieved by a Deputy of

higher rank.

Note: The first arriving SWAT team tactical personnel will establish Tactical command pursuant to team S.O.P.'s. As squad leaders or the members of SWAT command arrive, they WILL assume tactical command.

2. Ensure that the responsibilities listed above for the first Deputies on scene have been taken care of.
3. Establish an outer perimeter and assign deputies to secure it.
4. Ensure that proper notification of the incident has begun by notifying your immediate supervisor as soon as it is feasible to do so and request that they forward the information up the chain of command to include notification to the Sheriff.
5. Establish an incident command post in a safe location near the scene where the subject cannot observe or impact the activities taking place at the command post.
6. If necessary, arrange for Situation Maps to be brought to the incident command post,
7. Designate a staging area and assign a Deputy to coordinate it so that other personnel providing support or assistance can stage and be briefed upon their arrival.
8. Arrange for the acquisition of a floor plan of the building / facility involved. This could be an actual blueprint if available, or a sketch made by someone familiar with the current layout of the structure.
9. Determine the location(s) of family members or other persons with whom the hostage taker (s) has a rapport.
10. Brief command deputies and /or S.W.A.T. Team members upon their arrival.
11. Provide assistance as requested by the SWAT Commander.
12. Ensure that no Sheriff's Office personnel become involved in any negotiations with the hostage taker (s) once Negotiators have started to negotiate (unless requested to do so by the Hostage Negotiation squad leader).
13. Request and coordinate the use of additional personnel and equipment as needed:

- a) Fire / E.M.S
- b) Additional Law Enforcement Resources
 - i. Surveillance equipment
 - ii. Night vision
 - iii. Thermal cameras
 - iv. Helicopter
- c) Depending on the size, scope, duration and location of the incident, this may include organizations such as the Red Cross who can assist with shelter / food for evacuated people if the number of evacuees and their inability to arrange for shelter themselves justifies it.

C) Activation of SWAT and Notification of Deployment

1. In all situations involving hostages, Deputies at the scene will notify the on-duty supervisor. The on-duty supervisor will contact the S.W.A.T. commander or appointed designee via WACDC and advise him/her of the situation.
2. The entire Weber Metro SWAT team will deploy on all hostage situations.
3. Activation of SWAT and the requisite notifications will be accomplished as outlined in policy 35.1.14 “ Activation of the Team .”
4. SWAT team members on duty at the time of the incident should immediately, upon notification of the event, gear up and respond to the scene.

D) Responsibilities of SWAT

1. In accordance with team S.O.P's , the first arriving tactical team member will:
 - a) Establish Tactical Command
 - b) Meet up with the Incident Commander and get a briefing on the situation.
 - c) Locate a suitable tactical coordination point
 - d) Advise dispatch of the “ safe route in “ so that additional responding resources are not placed in greater jeopardy.
 - e) As tactical team members arrive, begin to deploy them in a

deliberate effort to replace non SWAT personnel in containment positions.

i. All non SWAT personnel should be instructed to clear from the inner perimeter as soon as they are relieved by tactical officers.

ii. Marksmen deploy themselves

f) Formulate plans for a “ hasty rescue “ effort should it become clear that the hostage’s safety is in imminent jeopardy.

2. The highest ranking SWAT **tactical** member will:

a) Assume tactical command of the situation pursuant to Weber Metro SWAT Team Policy 35.1.9 “ Operational Authority and Decision Making “ .

b) Relieve patrol deputies as soon as it is practical to do so and have SWAT maintain the inner perimeter during the course of the event.

c) Develop and implement tactical plans.

d) Arrange for the Evacuation of remaining civilians as necessary.

e) Work closely with the incident commander to help bring about a successful resolution to the incident.

f) Have the authority to request aid from other tactical teams when the size, scope, or duration of the event exceeds our teams capabilities.

3. Negotiator Responsibilities will include:

a) Debrief the patrol deputies who were initially on the scene in order to learn as much as possible about the situation,

b) Obtain background information concerning the hostage taker (s) , including, but not limited to:

i. Location of family members,

ii. Medical history (mental health issues, drug user, history of violence, etc.)

iii. Complete criminal history

iv. Contact information for any medical or mental health professionals who may be treating the subject

v. If the hostage taker has a phone and what the phone

number is.

- vi. If the hostage taker has made any demands and the nature of them.
- vii. What weapons were used or are present
- viii. Multiple color copies of the most current photograph available for each identified hostage taker.
Booking, drivers license or family photos for example.

c) Obtain information about the hostages to include;

- i. The number of hostages being held
- ii. Their location within the structure
- iii. Their current condition
- iv. Their identities
- v. Relationship to the hostage taker if any
- vi. Multiple color copies of a current photograph of each hostage.

d) Once Tactical Command is prepared to deal with both anticipated and unanticipated actions by the subject, the Negotiators may be given permission to attempt to contact the hostage taker (s) by telephone.

- i. If the individual has no phone, negotiators can provide a "drop phone."

e) If telephone contact cannot be established, negotiators may attempt communications through the use of a bullhorn, by passing notes, or other reasonable means.

f) If negotiators can establish communications with the hostage taker, the negotiators will begin a dialogue with the individual to attempt to resolve the situation.

g) Negotiators, generally, should not negotiate for weapons, drugs, alcohol, or vehicles.

h) The negotiations squad leader, or highest ranking negotiator on scene, will provide continual situation reports to the tactical commander regarding the suspect and the status of negotiations.

i) The use / continued use of negotiations will be determined by the tactical commander as outlined in Weber Metro SWAT policy 35.1.9 "Operational Authority and Decision Making".

4. When the situation is over, either as a result of the surrender, capture or death of the hostage taker (s) , the Tactical commander will relinquish the scene and follow-up investigation to the Sheriff's Office Investigators or other agency investigators as appropriate.

E) Communication with other agencies

1. Communications with other agencies will be coordinated through WACDC by the incident commander.
2. All police agencies involved in a hostage incident within Weber County should have access to the same radio frequencies.
3. The Weber Metro S.W.A.T. team will generally NOT deploy into another agency's jurisdiction unless requested by that agency. Should it become necessary for the S.W.A.T. team to be deployed within the boundaries of another agency's jurisdiction, notification to that jurisdiction should be made in a timely manner prior to the commencement of the operation.
 - a) The Deputy making contact with the outside agency will document the name of the person(s) he/she contacted about the operation.

35.3.8 Media Relations

- A) A PIO will be designated and will be responsible to set up a location for the media to gather.
- B) The PIO will respond to the command post, report to the incident commander, and will clear all press releases with the incident commander prior to release to the media.
- C) Media access to the scene shall be limited to areas where they will not be exposed to danger.
- D) Under no circumstances shall members of the news media be permitted within the inner perimeter.
- E) So as not to compromise the police response, under no circumstances shall any member of this Sheriff's Office release specific details of the situation or the police response to the media.
- F) If representatives from the news media arrive prior to the inner and outer perimeters being established, Sheriff's Office personnel will courteously direct said representatives to a safe location and inform them that a PIO is

en route to coordinate the release of details and information.

G) After the arrival of the incident commander, he/she will designate areas to which the media may have access.

H) Deputies (whether involved in the incident or not) will refer all media inquiries to the on-scene PIO.

35.3.9 Annual Review of Plan

A. The Sheriff's Office Hostage Situations plan will be reviewed at least annually by the bureau commanders, the SWAT Commander, the Law Enforcement Chief Deputy, Undersheriff and the Sheriff.