


Critical Incident Response Team

404.1 POLICY HEADER

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September 1, 2021	January 4, 2023
Authorization:  Jason Haberman Chief of Police	

404.2 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for the specialized support of the Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) in handling critical field operations where special tactical deployment methods or intense negotiations are beyond the capacity of field officers.

404.2.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Negotiation team - Designated officers, including those in a multijurisdictional team, who are specifically trained and equipped to provide skilled verbal communications to de-escalate or effect surrender in situations where suspects have taken hostages or barricaded themselves or are suicidal.

Tactical team - Designated officers, including those in a multijurisdictional team, who are specifically trained and equipped to resolve critical incidents that are so hazardous, complex or unusual that they may exceed the capabilities of first responders or investigators. This includes, but is not limited to, hostage taking, barricaded suspects, snipers, terrorist acts and other high-risk incidents. As a matter of department policy, a tactical team may also be used to serve high-risk warrants, both search and arrest, where public and officer safety issues necessitate such use.

404.3 POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Mt. Lebanon Police Department to maintain a CIRT, either internally or through participation in a regional team, comprised of negotiation and tactical teams, and to provide the equipment, manpower and training necessary to maintain such teams. The CIRT should develop sufficient resources to perform three basic operational functions:

- (a) Command and control
- (b) Containment

Critical Incident Response Team

- (c) Entry/apprehension/rescue

404.4 PROCEDURES

Situations that necessitate the need for a CIRT response vary greatly from incident to incident and often demand on-scene evaluation. The guidelines allow for appropriate on-scene decision-making and development of organizational and operational procedures.

When a determination is made to request a critical incident response team to assist in high-risk or special emergency operations, the Department shall utilize the South Hills Area Council of Governments (SHACOG) Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT).

[For CIRT ACTIVATION Process click here](#)

[For CIRT ACTIVATION Procedure click here](#)

404.4.1 ORGANIZATIONAL PROCEDURES

The Department shall develop a separate written set of organizational procedures that should address, at a minimum:

- (a) Specific missions the CIRT is capable of performing.
- (b) CIRT organization and function.
- (c) Member selection, retention and termination criteria.
- (d) Training and required competencies, including record production and retention.
- (e) Procedures for notification, activation, deactivation and deployment.
- (f) Command and control issues, including a clearly defined command structure and dedicated lines of communication.
- (g) Multi-agency response.
- (h) Out-of-jurisdiction response.
- (i) Specialized functions and supporting resources.

404.4.2 OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

The SHACOG CIRT shall develop a separate written set of operational procedures in accordance with the determination of the CIRT's level of capability, using sound risk-reduction practices. The operational procedures should be patterned after the National Tactical Officers Association's (NTOA) SWAT Standard for Law Enforcement Agencies. Because such procedures are specific to CIRT members and outline negotiation, tactical and officer safety issues, they are not included within this policy.

Critical Incident Response Team

404.5 OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

The following are guidelines for the operational deployment of the CIRT. Generally, the tactical team and the negotiation team will be activated together. It is recognized, however, that the teams can be activated independently as circumstances dictate. The tactical team may be used in a situation not requiring the physical presence of the negotiation team, such as warrant service operations. The negotiation team may be used in a situation not requiring the physical presence of the tactical team, such as handling a suicidal person. Operational deployment of the specialized teams shall be at the discretion of the CIRT Commander.

404.5.1 APPROPRIATE USE

Incidents that may result in the activation of the CIRT include:

- (a) Barricaded suspects who refuse an order to surrender.
- (b) Incidents where hostages are taken.
- (c) Individuals who are threatening suicide and have refused to surrender.
- (d) Arrests of potentially armed or dangerous persons.
- (e) Any situation that could threaten or undermine the ability of the Department to preserve life, maintain social order and ensure the protection of persons or property.

Requests by field personnel for assistance from crisis response units from another agency must be approved by the Watch Commander.

404.5.2 ON-SCENE DETERMINATION AND NOTIFICATION

The supervisor-in-charge at the scene of a particular event will be designated as the Incident Commander and will assess whether the CIRT is to respond to the scene by using the [Risk Assessment Matrix](#). With input from the Incident Commander, final determination will be made by the Watch Commander, who shall then notify the Duty Officer for approval to request CIRT. Notification should be made to the CIRT Commander through the Dispatch Center.

The Watch Commander should brief the CIRT Commander about the incident. Such information should include:

- (a) The type of crime involved.
- (b) The number of suspects, identity and criminal history.
- (c) The known weapons and resources available to the suspect.
- (d) If the suspect is in control of hostages and/or barricaded.
- (e) Whether contact has been made with the suspect and whether there have been demands.
- (f) If potential victims are still within the inner perimeter.
- (g) If the suspect has threatened or attempted suicide.
- (h) The location of the command post and a safe approach to it.
- (i) The extent of any inner or outer perimeter and the number of personnel involved.

Mt. Lebanon Police Department

Policy Manual

Critical Incident Response Team

- (j) Any other assets or resources at the scene including other involved agencies.
- (k) Any other important facts critical to the immediate situation.

404.5.3 FIELD PERSONNEL RESPONSIBILITIES

While waiting for the CIRT to respond, field personnel should, if determined to be safe and practicable and sufficient resources exist:

- (a) Establish an arrest/response team in case the suspect takes action. The response team's tasks may include:
 - 1. Taking action to mitigate a deadly threat or behavior either inside or outside the location.
 - 2. Securing any subject or suspect who may surrender or attempt to escape.
- (b) Evacuate any injured persons in the zone of danger.
- (c) Evacuate or provide safety instructions to other people in the zone of danger.
- (d) Establish an inner and outer perimeter.
- (e) Establish a command post outside of the inner perimeter.
- (f) Attempt to establish preliminary communication with the suspect. Once the CIRT has arrived, all negotiations should generally be halted to allow the negotiation and tactical teams time to organize, position and assume the appropriate roles and responsibilities.
- (g) Plan for, and stage, anticipated resources.

404.5.4 ON-SCENE COMMAND RESPONSIBILITIES

Upon arrival of the CIRT at the scene, the Incident Commander shall brief the CIRT Commander and team supervisors. The CIRT Commander or the authorized designee will be responsible for the tactical response and negotiations. The Incident Commander shall continue to supervise the command post operation, outer perimeter security, evacuation and media access and will support the CIRT. The Incident Commander and CIRT Commander or the authorized designee shall maintain direct communication at all times.

404.5.5 COMMUNICATIONS WITH CIRT MEMBERS

All persons who are non-CIRT members should refrain from any non-emergency contact or interference with any CIRT member during active negotiations. All non-emergency communications shall be channeled through the negotiation team or tactical team supervisor or the authorized designee.

404.6 TACTICAL TEAM ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES

The tactical team was established to provide a skilled and trained team for deployment to events that require specialized tactics, in situations where suspects have taken hostages and/or barricaded themselves, and in prolonged or predictable situations where persons who are armed or suspected of being armed pose a danger to themselves or others.

Mt. Lebanon Police Department

Policy Manual

Critical Incident Response Team

The following procedures serve as directives for the administrative operation of the tactical team.

404.6.1 SELECTION OF TACTICAL MEMBERS

Interested members who are off probation shall indicate their interest on their wish list to the Operations Deputy Chief of Police. Upon approval by the Chief of Police, the member will be scheduled for an assessment by the CIRT Commander. The CIRT Commander shall submit a list of successful applicants to command staff for final selection.

404.6.2 TACTICAL TRAINING

Training shall be coordinated by the CIRT Commander. Members selected for CIRT shall participate in basic and advanced training, as determined by the CIRT Commander, prior to assignment as an active CIRT member. The CIRT Commander shall conduct quarterly tactical team training including canine teams.

404.7 NEGOTIATION TEAM ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES

The negotiation team has been established to provide skilled verbal communicators who will attempt to de-escalate and effect surrender in critical situations where suspects have taken hostages or barricaded themselves or have suicidal tendencies.

The following procedures serve as directives for the administrative operation of the negotiation team.

404.7.1 SELECTION OF NEGOTIATION MEMBERS

Interested department members who are off probation shall indicate their interest on their wish list to the Operations Deputy Chief of Police. Upon approval by the Chief of Police, the member will be scheduled for an assessment by the CIRT Commander. The CIRT Commander shall submit a list of successful applicants to the Chief of Police for the final selection.

404.7.2 NEGOTIATION TRAINING

Training shall be coordinated by the CIRT Commander. Members selected for CIRT shall participate in basic training, as determined by the CIRT Commander, prior to assignment as an active CIRT negotiator.

A minimum of one training day per quarter will be required to provide the opportunity for role playing and situational training necessary to maintain proper skills.

404.8 UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

CIRT specialized teams from this department should wear uniforms that clearly identify them as law enforcement members. It is recognized that certain tactical conditions may require covert movement. Attire may be selected that is appropriate to the specific mission.

Mt. Lebanon Police Department

Policy Manual

Critical Incident Response Team

404.8.1 EQUIPMENT

CIRT specialized team members shall wear the issued body armor whenever the CIRT is deployed.

404.8.2 FIREARMS

Weapons and equipment used by the CIRT specialized teams and any supporting resources should be department-issued or approved, including any modifications, additions or attachments.

404.9 TRAINING

The CIRT Commander shall conduct an annual CIRT training needs assessment to ensure that training correlates to the team's capabilities and policy. This includes, but is not limited to, specialized vehicle training.

404.9.1 TRAINING DOCUMENTATION

Individual training shall be documented and records maintained by the Administrative Secretary. Such documentation shall be maintained in each member's training file.

Attachments

Risk Assessment Matrix (01).pdf



RISK ASSESSMENT MATRIX

Risk Assessment is based on facts and circumstances known to police regarding suspect(s). Check (X) a maximum of one block in each of the six categories (the block with the greatest score applicable to the subject/location). Tally the "score" to determine suggested service level. **NOTE:** The Matrix is to be used as a "tool" in the decision making process when considering CIRT Activation.

POINTS	FACTS	X	SCORE
Search Warrants			
0	Search Warrant is for evidence of crime against property		
2	Search Warrant is for drugs		
3	Search Warrant is for evidence of crime against person		
4	Search Warrant is for weapons		
Arrest Warrant			
1	Arrest Warrant is for property crimes		
2	Arrest Warrant is for crimes against person		
3	Arrest Warrant is for drug possession/distribution		
4	Arrest Warrant is for weapon violations		
Criminal History			
1	Subject of warrant has property crime history only		
2	Subject has history of crime against persons (simple assault, domestic, etc)		
3	Subject of warrant has history/arrest/involvement of drug/drug deliveries		
5	Subject of warrant has made statements regarding resisting apprehension/search		
7	Subject of warrant has violent criminal history (robbery, rape, aggravated assault, etc)		
9	Subject of warrant has used weapons (not firearms) during the commission of crimes		
10	Subject of warrant has used firearms during the commission of crimes		
Entry			
1	Service of warrant requires minimal forced entry		
5	Service of warrant requires use of ram, sledgehammer or other similar devices		
10	Location is fortified or the subject has "guard dogs" or counter surveillance or monitoring equipment in place		
Weapons			
5	Believed that firearms are readily available to suspect at location of warrant		
6	Intel indicates subject of warrant normally armed with a weapon (not firearm)		
8	Subject of warrant known to carry firearms on person or has been arrested for VUFA		
10	Subject of warrant is always armed.		
Note: If a fully automatic weapon has been identified as used in the commission of the crime or the subject has access to an automatic weapon and this information has been confirmed, CIRT will serve the warrant.			
Miscellaneous			
5	Subject of warrant has association affiliation (gang, extremist, etc)		
6	Subject of warrant has history of mental/psychological instability		
9	Subject of warrant has history of assaults or resisting arrest offenses against police		
Total Points			

SERVICE LEVEL	
Note: Prior to contacting CIRT Command, approval must be granted by the requesting department's Chief of Police or his designee.	
0 – 18 pts	Service/Execution may be handled by respective police agency
19 – 29 pts	Consultation with CIRT Command is a consideration for service.
30 + pts	Consultation with CIRT Command is required for service.
All Warrants shall have a "Risk Assessment" completed prior to service of the warrant unless exigent circumstances exist for immediate service. Copies of ALL completed "Risk Assessments" shall be given to and reviewed by the CIRT Commander or his designee within 24 hours of warrant service. Copies should include the warrant to be served, criminal history synopsis, location information, and any other pertinent information used in completing the "Risk Assessment".	