



SHERIFF'S EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM GENERAL ORDER #19.02

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PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The mission of the Sheriff's Emergency Response Team (S.E.R.T.) is to provide specialized support in handling critical and high-risk field operations throughout Santa Clara County and in mutual aid of agencies requesting assistance where special tactical deployment methods beyond the capacity of field officers appear to be necessary. The primary purpose behind the Sheriff's Emergency Response Team is to reduce risk to the community, law enforcement, and suspect(s). This policy was established in compliance with the guidelines set by the Attorney General's Commission on Special Weapons and Tactics 2022 Report and the POST 2019 SWAT Operational Guidelines and Standardized Training Recommendations (pursuant to Penal Code § 13514.1).

SHERIFF'S EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (S.E.R.T.) DEFINITION

The Sheriff's Emergency Response Team is a designated specialized unit of Sheriff's personnel that is specifically trained and equipped to work as a coordinated team to respond to critical incidents including, but not limited to, hostage taking, barricaded suspects, snipers, terrorist acts and other high-risk incidents. As a matter of agency policy, such a unit may be used to serve high-risk warrants, both search and arrest, where public and officer safety issues compel the use of such a unit.

POLICY

It shall be the policy of this department to maintain the Sheriff's Emergency Response Team (S.E.R.T.) and to provide the equipment, personnel resources, and training necessary to maintain the unit. The Sheriff's Emergency Response Team should develop sufficient resources to perform four basic operational functions:

1. Command and control
2. Containment

3. Entry, Apprehension and Rescue
4. Precision Rifle/Observer

It is understood that it is difficult to categorize specific capabilities for critical incidents. Training needs may vary based on the experience level of the team personnel, team administrators and potential incident commanders.

An assessment should be conducted to determine the type and extent of S.E.R.T. missions and operations appropriate to this department. The assessment should consider the team's capabilities and limitations and should be reviewed annually by the S.E.R.T. Commander or his/her designee. S.E.R.T. members shall follow the policies and procedures of the team as established by the team command.

BASIC OPERATIONAL FUNCTIONS

1. Command and Control

- Planning, organizing, staffing, and directing the overall tactical operation including:
 - Establishing Incident and Tactical Command
 - Establishing and relaying the operational goals
 - Continually assessing the situation as it develops and determining the appropriateness of the planned course of action
- Coordination with support resources such as the Crisis Negotiation Team (CNT), Bomb Squad, Canine Unit, etc.
- Coordination with allied agencies
- Mission documentation
- Communications
- Medical support
- Mission debriefings
- After action reports (AAR)

2. Containment

- Control of the inner perimeter
- Evacuation
- Tactical deliveries

3. Entry, Apprehension and Rescue

- Scouting Missions
- Breaching

- Enter, search and secure objective(s)
 - Rescue operations
 - Subject/suspect detention
4. Precision Rifle/Observer
- Intelligence gathering and reconnaissance
 - Overwatch support
 - Concealment and camouflage techniques
 - Precision shooting capabilities

IDENTIFIED MISSIONS FOR S.E.R.T RESPONSE

S.E.R.T. resolves critical incidents beyond the general response capabilities of patrol operations or situations that warrant a coordinated tactical team approach. The following is a general list of missions typically warranting a S.E.R.T. response:

- Hostage rescue operations
- Barricaded subject operations
- Sniper operations
- High-risk warrant services
- High-risk apprehension operations
- High-risk security and dignitary protection details
- Terrorism response operations

TEAM ORGANIZATION AND COMMAND STRUCTURE

1. Sheriff, Undersheriff and Assistant Sheriff for the Field Enforcement Bureau

For the purpose of mission command, the Sheriff, Undersheriff and the Assistant Sheriff for the Field Enforcement Bureau, are of an overall command status that is separate from the Operational and Tactical command. The Operations Commander is ultimately responsible for the mission and all decisions made. The Tactical Commander is responsible for all tactical decisions. The Team Leaders are responsible for carrying out the tactical decisions. The Team members are responsible for their actions and to follow orders given by the chain of command. S.E.R.T. is assigned to the Special Enforcement Division of the Field Enforcement Bureau. Therefore, the Field Enforcement Bureau Assistant Sheriff will be notified of and ultimately authorize all S.E.R.T. missions.

2. Operations Commander – Captain of Special Enforcement

The Captain of the Special Enforcement Division will serve as the Operations Commander and is responsible for overall command of S.E.R.T. operations, to include all tactical, crisis negotiation, and support resources committed to the incident. The

Operations Commander provides authority for all efforts necessary to resolve the event and authorizes all actions. The directives and orders of the S.E.R.T. Operations Commander are absolute to team members and are imperative should the order to neutralize a target be given to a team member. The funding, development, training, and utilization will be directed and assured by the Operations Commander.

3. Tactical Commander - S.E.R.T. Tactical Commander

The Tactical Commander is responsible for directing all S.E.R.T. tactical operations, to include planning and executing courses of action. The Tactical Commander controls all tactical units, S.E.R.T. or otherwise, committed to an event. The Tactical Commander is also responsible for the following oversight and tasks:

- Approving, reviewing, and ensuring compliance of all team policies, procedures, duties, and orders.
- Ensuring completion of continuous and specialized training as well as team member evaluation.
- Selection and training of new members.
- Ensuring the team and team members maintain the highest standards possible and is responsible for the team and individual member's conduct.
- Reporting to the Operations Commander.

4. Team Sergeants

The Team Sergeants will provide oversight for the entry and sniper elements. The Team Sergeants must be the rank of Sergeant and are to be selected based on knowledge and experience. There shall be a Sergeant assigned to oversee the entry team and a Sergeant assigned to oversee the sniper/observer team, but both shall have the experience and knowledge to be interchangeable. The Team Sergeants will have the following responsibilities:

- Advisory role in mission planning and operation oversight.
- Training/mentoring the Team Leaders.
- Preparation of a yearly training schedule for the team based on a training needs assessment. The schedule will be reviewed by the Tactical Commander.
- Ensuring that all members are aware of the dates, type, and locations of training.
- Ensuring there is an accurate record of all team training performance, which will contribute to a reduction in liability and enhanced safety through early identification and resolution of non-proficiencies.
- Administrative oversight for all team members' equipment, equipment records, and inspections of equipment, logs and personnel.

5. Team Leaders

The Team Leaders are selected by the S.E.R.T. Commander to lead and be responsible for the training, duties, assignments, records, and conduct of the team and team members. The Team Leaders are to be selected based on performance, knowledge and experience. The Team Leaders may hold the rank of Sergeant or Deputy depending on the needs of the team at the time of appointment. The Team Leaders will consult with the Tactical Commander and Team Sergeants on mission planning. The Team Leaders will command and control the team during all phases of S.E.R.T. events and training. The Team Leaders will designate a rank structure based on the performance and abilities of each Team Member. This ranking will be regularly reviewed and can be changed at any time. The Team Leaders will advise the S.E.R.T. Team Sergeants and the Tactical Commander of any and all changes.

6. Assistant Team Leaders

The Assistant Team Leaders are selected by the Team Leaders to assist in the responsibilities and duties associated with the team. The Assistant Team Leaders shall assume responsibility for the team in the absence of their Team Leaders.

7. Team Members

S.E.R.T. is made up of a variety of personnel to provide various services and to perform various tasks in specific scenarios and circumstances as outlined in this policy. These personnel are directly responsible to the Tactical Commander and are the regular team members, command personnel, team administrator/liaison, reserve deputies, armorer(s), various medical personnel, and any additional personnel depending on mission goals and needs.

Each member of the Team is responsible for his/her own conduct and compliance to the department and team policies and procedures. Team Members and their equipment are to be ready at all times to respond to a critical event or training at any time. Team Members will conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times. Team Members will maintain a professional appearance. Team Members are not to bring any undue attention to themselves or their Team. Each Team Member will follow and complete all tasks, duties, and lawful orders as directed by the S.E.R.T. Commander, Team Leaders, or ranking Team Members. The Team Members are responsible for maintaining their shooting skills to the highest standard. As much on-duty time as possible should be made available to develop marksmanship. However, it is the Team Members who are ultimately responsible for their marksmanship abilities. Team Members are to utilize the Sheriff's Office Range whenever possible to practice shooting skills. The Department will provide ammunition as needed for training.

S.E.R.T. PERSONNEL SELECTION

Interested sworn personnel who are off probation and have at least one year of patrol time shall submit an interest memorandum, resume and supervisor letter of recommendation to the Personnel Division during the posted selection period. Those qualifying applicants will then be invited to participate in the testing process. The order of the tests will be given at the discretion

of the S.E.R.T. Tactical Commander. The testing process will consist of an oral board, physical agility, firearms evaluation, and scenario evaluation.

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS AND CORE COMPETENCIES

1. Basic Special Weapons and Tactics (S.W.A.T.) School

Each Team Member shall attend and satisfactorily complete a basic California Peace Officer Standards and Training (P.O.S.T.) certified S.W.A.T. school. The purpose of the basic school is to familiarize each member with basic knowledge and skills necessary to contribute to the S.E.R.T. team. The chosen school should address basic subjects and skills such as:

- Communications (radios and terminology)
- Mission concepts (types and planning)
- Assaults (residential, commercial, vehicle, etc.)
- Weapon and wound ballistics
- Team responsibilities
- Rules of engagement and shooting policies
- Advanced defensive tactics
- Advanced de-escalation techniques
- Scenarios (barricaded suspects, hostage rescues, etc.)
- Rappelling
- Marksmanship
- Room entries
- Equipment
- Use of gas (tactics and systems)
- Tactics and weapons
- Close quarters combat skills
- Physical surveillance
- Scouting (drawings, diagrams, photos and notes)

2. Special Weapon Schools

Each team member will be assigned a department issued primary special weapon based on experience, proficiency and team need. Each of these weapons are very different and require specific knowledge and skill to be a proficient operator. Once a primary weapon is assigned, the member will attend a basic school for that weapon. Additionally, each member will attend a basic handgun school for their secondary weapon, a department

issued Glock 9mm. Once the team member completes the basic weapon schools, the S.E.R.T. weapon qualification course shall be administered and passed, prior to the member carrying that weapon on a mission. Members shall qualify and maintain an expert rating on their primary and secondary weapons.

3. Additional Advanced Tactical Schools

Team members shall be provided additional training according to team need. They should be trained in various skills and fields associated with the S.E.R.T. mission. Members should be sent to advanced tactical and instructor schools to further build that individual's and the team's proficiency as well as provide "in-house" training for other team members. It should be remembered that tactics and equipment are constantly changing and constant team member attendance in such schools will keep the team informed of current trends, legal updates, best practices, and industry standards. Attending various schools will expose the member, and the team, to newer, better, or alternative methods of dealing with tactical problems.

Types of Additional Schools:

- Gas delivery systems and tactics
- Dignitary protection
- Rappelling
- Counter-sniper
- Large caliber precision rifle
- Less lethal systems
- Close quarters combat instruction
- Bus and train assaults
- Armored Rescue Vehicle (ARV) operations
- Vehicle interdiction
- S.W.A.T. Tactical Commander and Team Leader courses
- Armorer schools
- Public venue response
- Aerial platform operations
- Participation in tactical competitions should be considered as advanced training

4. Recurrent Team Training

S.E.R.T. core competencies are perishable. All S.E.R.T. team members shall participate in documented training to maintain individual and team core competencies as determined by the type and extent of S.E.R.T. missions and operations performed. These recurrent trainings shall be documented in an After Training Report (ATR) that should include a

roster of participants, topics covered, and lessons learned. S.E.R.T. members should maintain proficiency in the following core competencies:

Weapons, Munitions, and Equipment

- a. Armored rescue vehicle (ARV) operations
- b. Equipment familiarization and maintenance
- c. Firearm skills (live fire)
 - i. Handgun
 - ii. Low light/night training
 - iii. Shoulder-fired weapons
- d. Individual uniform maintenance and wear
- e. Ladder, rappelling, fast roping, and other high angle access
- f. Lighting systems (personal, weapons, other)
- g. Breaching
 - i. Ballistic
 - ii. Hydraulic
 - iii. Manual
 - iv. Mechanical
 - v. Thermal
 - vi. Explosive
- h. Munitions
 - i. Chemical agents: options and delivery systems
 - ii. Diversionary devices and delivery systems
 - iii. Less-lethal impact munitions and delivery systems
 - iv. Other less-lethal options
- i. Night Vision Equipment
- j. Use of ballistic shields
- k. Weapons maintenance

Individual and Team Movement/Tactics

- a. Active shooter response
 - i. Contact team
 - ii. Corridor team

- iii. Rescue task force
- b. Aircraft intervention
- c. Arrest and control
- d. Barricaded subject operations
- e. Booby traps
- f. Camouflage techniques
- g. Conducting evacuations
- h. Containment techniques
- i. Cover and movement
- j. Downed officer/civilian rescues
- k. Dynamic entry/clearing
- l. Emergency deployment techniques
- m. Entries
- n. High-risk warrant service
 - i. Surround & call-outs
 - ii. Distractions techniques
 - iii. Dynamic
 - iv. Remote takedowns
 - v. Ruses, etc.
- o. Homicide bombers
- p. Hostage rescue
- q. Immediate action drills
- r. Linear assaults (planes, trains, buses)
- s. Night movement
- t. Precision rifle-initiated assaults
- u. Rappelling and ascending (rural and urban)
 - i. Airborne fast-roping, STABO operations
 - ii. Static
- v. Rescue operations – basic
- w. Rural operations
- x. Scouting

- y. Searching techniques
- z. Slow and deliberate (stealth) entry/clearing
 - aa. Small unit tactics
 - bb. Tactical casualty care
 - cc. Unique demand locations (schools, hospitals, multi-story structures, hazmat manufacturing sites, etc.)
- dd. Vehicle rescues

Planning and Decision-Making

- a. Barricaded subject/suspect
- b. Command Post
- c. High risk warrant (dynamic, surround & call-out, etc.)
- d. Hostage situations
 - i. Confirmation incident is a hostage situation
 - ii. Criminal vs. Terrorist
 - iii. Hostage rescue
 - iv. Other
- e. Mission and tactical contingency planning
- f. Tactical Operation Center
- g. Training simulations (scenario-based training)

As part of recurrent training, S.E.R.T. and supporting resources (CNT, Bomb, K9, etc.) shall participate in scenario-based training as part of the agency training requirements. Scenario-based training that simulates the tactical environment is a vital method of improving performance during actual deployment as well as improving decision making skills. The training scenarios should include the use of de-escalation and disengagement tactics.

5. Command Staff Training

S.E.R.T. command personnel should attend a POST-certified SWAT commander or tactical commander course, or its equivalent, as well as other tactical team trainings to include topics such as SWAT command decision making, risk management, liability mitigation, legal updates, team development, leadership and SWAT conferences. Command personnel are strongly encouraged to participate in their agency's scheduled S.E.R.T. training.

Command and executive personnel who may function in an incident command role should attend a SWAT or critical incident commander course, or its equivalent. This training provides a needed understanding of the purposes and capabilities of the team.

CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES FOR ACTIVATION AND DEPLOYMENT

S.E.R.T. has a high-risk assessment process to research and evaluate risks associated with pre-planned or spontaneous events. The purpose of the high-risk assessment is to identify potential hazards, reduce risk, and utilize the proper personnel for the event. This process ensures the decision to deploy S.E.R.T. is made using objective, defensible, and clearly articulated criteria. S.E.R.T. high-risk assessments should be documented and maintained. The S.E.R.T. commander, Team Sergeants and/or Team Leaders should be consulted about a S.E.R.T. activation if circumstances such as the following exist:

- Planned event or critical incident with the probability of a violent confrontation
- A non-compliant violent felon in a structure or vehicle
- A fortified location or clandestine lab (internal fortifications and/or steel doors)
- Firearms are believed to be on a premises and the suspect(s) has threatened violence
- Automatic weapons, explosives, or military ordnance on the premises
- Suspect has a history of felonious assaults on a peace officer involving weapons
- Booby-traps are believed to be on the premises
- Specific articulable facts that there is likelihood of a violent and/or armed confrontation

Once S.E.R.T. Command Staff has been consulted on a pre-planned operation or critical incident and they have made a recommendation for or against deployment, the chain of command shall be notified and the Assistant Sheriff for the Enforcement Bureau will ultimately have approval authority.

S.E.R.T. EQUIPMENT USE CONSIDERATIONS

The specialized equipment assigned to S.E.R.T. as listed in Sheriff's Office General Order #10.08 [Military Equipment Funding, Acquisition and Use] shall be used by a team member only after applicable training, including any course required by the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) has been completed, unless exigent circumstances arise. The use of various weapons, tools, and equipment assigned to S.E.R.T. is governed by Sheriff's Office General Order #12.00 [Use of Force], #12.02 [Use of Firearms], #12.04 [Use of Less Lethal Munitions], #13.05 [Sheriff's Command Vehicle], #13.07 [Armored Rescue Vehicle] and #17.03 [Demonstrations and Civil Disorders]. These policies, as well as associated trainings, outline common situations in which special equipment may be deployed to de-escalate and bring incidents under control. However, in recognition of the reality that emergency situations may present unique facts and circumstances and may be rapidly evolving, these policies do not offer a comprehensive list of each and every scenario where this specialized equipment may be deployed. Nevertheless, in every instance, deployment of this specialized equipment must comply with the legal policy parameters described in these policies, including, but not limited to the use of reasonable and proportional force, the use of de-escalation and alternatives to force where feasible, the limits on less-lethal weapons use in crowd control settings, and other requirements described in this policy.

COMMAND AND CONTROL ISSUES

When assistance is provided by another jurisdiction in conjunction with a S.E.R.T. operation, S.E.R.T. shall maintain full operational command and control over responding agency personnel and resources. The following guidelines will safeguard against military or other equipment being used during a S.E.R.T. operation in Sheriff's Office jurisdiction that is outside the scope of approved use.

1. Assisting law enforcement agencies and any associated military equipment would be used under the guidelines of their respective agency policies, however the deployment of these assets will be coordinated, directed, and managed through the S.E.R.T. Tactical Commander.
2. The S.E.R.T. Tactical Commander will make every attempt to ensure military equipment is deployed in a manner consistent with Sheriff's Office policy and in a manner approved by the governing body through communication with assisting law enforcement liaison officers.

OUT OF JURISDICTION RESPONSE

When S.E.R.T. provides mutual aid to another law enforcement agency, S.E.R.T. personnel and resources will be coordinated, directed, and managed through the Incident Commander for the agency of jurisdiction in conjunction with the S.E.R.T. Tactical Commander or a designated S.E.R.T. liaison. The following guidelines will safeguard against requests that explicitly violate Sheriff's Office policy or prohibited uses of Sheriff's Office military equipment when providing mutual aid:

1. S.E.R.T. personnel shall adhere to Sheriff's Office policies regarding the use of force at all times regardless of any outside request.
2. S.E.R.T. personnel, military and other equipment shall not be used if the mutual aid request is in violation of Sheriff's Office policies.
3. The S.E.R.T. Tactical Commander or designated S.E.R.T. liaison will be assigned and remain with the allied agency's Incident Commander for the duration of the involvement by S.E.R.T.
4. The S.E.R.T. Tactical Commander or designated S.E.R.T. liaison will assist with the coordination of assets and maintain a level of oversight with respect to Sheriff's Office policies.

INTEGRATION OF SPECIALIZED UNITS AND SUPPORTING RESOURCES

It is the policy of the Sheriff's Office that other specialized units should be integrated into S.E.R.T. operations when feasible as supporting resources and de-escalation tools. Other specialized units have additional areas of expertise which may assist with the overall mission to affect a peaceful resolution.

1. Crisis Negotiations Team

The Sheriff's Office Crisis Negotiations Team (CNT) is a designated group of personnel specifically selected, trained, and equipped to assist in the resolution of critical incidents

by utilizing communication, intelligence gathering, and negotiation with criminal suspects and other persons. A minimum of two (2) crisis negotiators shall be integrated into all S.E.R.T. operations and critical incident responses. A Negotiations Operations Center (NOC) shall be established in coordination with S.E.R.T. Tactical Command. The four primary operations functions of CNT are as follows:

- Communications/Negotiations
 - Intelligence
 - Tactical Liaison
 - Logistic
2. Bomb Squad

The Sheriff's Office Bomb Squad is a designated group of personnel specifically selected, trained, and equipped to mitigate explosive, destructive and hazardous materials. The Bomb Squad shall provide support to S.E.R.T. operations where the threat of explosive and other hazardous materials may be present. The Bomb Squad may additionally support S.E.R.T. operations by providing specialized resources such as remotely controlled robotic platforms in situations designated and authorized by Sheriff's Office General Order #10.08 [Military Equipment Funding, Acquisition and Use].

3. Canine Unit

The Canine Unit handlers and their partners are specially trained in disciplines such as apprehension and explosive detection. The Canine Unit provides another valuable resource in support of a S.E.R.T. operation to bring a violent encounter under control. The use of a canine will remain as outlined by the Sheriff's Office canine policy. Canine/SWAT integration training should take place prior to the use of a handler and his/her partner in a S.E.R.T. operation.

SHOOTING POLICY

1. This policy does not replace and is in addition to the Sheriff's Office General Order #12.00 [Use of Force], #12.02 [Use of Firearms] and #12.04 [Less Lethal Munitions].
2. S.E.R.T. members may discharge their assigned weapons at the Sheriff's Office Range, approved schools, on duty in compliance to General Orders, or during events designated by the S.E.R.T. Commander.
3. Members may discharge their assigned weapons to defend the lives of others, their lives, or at the direct order of the S.E.R.T. Commander, which is in accordance with these policies.

PRECISION RIFLE/OBSERVER POSITIONS

It is the policy of the Sheriff's Office and S.E.R.T. to maintain the position of Precision Rifle/Observer. The mission of the Precision Rifle/Observer Team is to respond immediately to all critical events as directed by the S.E.R.T. Commander. The Precision Rifle /Observer should be the first to arrive on the scene and assess the situation for team positions. The Precision Rifle

/Observer has the primary responsibility of gathering and reporting information to the S.E.R.T. Tactical Commander. Their secondary responsibility is to neutralize the situation if needed, through expert marksmanship. The team members will record all practice sessions and each individual shot in a Shooting Log. Members shall maintain themselves, their equipment, and logbooks to the highest professional standard.



**LAURIE SMITH
SHERIFF**