

Orange County Chiefs' of Police  
and Sheriff's Association

Operational & Procedural  
Protocol

**Subject:** Protocol Policy Governing  
Inter-City S.W.A.T. Operations

**Number:** 110  
**Effective Date:** October 2, 1991  
**Revised:**

1. **PURPOSE**

To establish recommended uniform guidelines to govern inter-city S.W.A.T. operations. This protocol policy will generally apply to the use of individual agency S.W.A.T. teams for the purpose of serving a high risk search and arrest warrants in jurisdictions outside their own.

2. **REFERENCES**

- A. Orange County Chiefs' of Police and Sheriff's Association approved of this procedure on October 2, 1991.
- B. The protocol was developed by S.W.A.T. Commanders from Orange County Police agencies and the Orange County Sheriff's Department.

3. **DEFINITION**

A S.W.A.T. team should consist of a predetermined number of specially selected sworn personnel who receive ongoing specialized training. They are brought together primarily for the purpose of implementing special tactics and utilizing special equipment in certain high risk situations. The primary goal of S.W.A.T. is risk reduction and the protection of life and property.

A High Risk Search or Arrest Warrant should consist of an order from the court, in writing, establishing the legal authority to search a prescribed location for the purposes of taking into custody persons or property named in the warrant. There should be articulate information present to indicate a significant risk exists at the prescribed location to be searched to justify the use of a S.W.A.T. team.

4. **PROTOCOL**

It is recognized that there is a genuine need for the use of S.W.A.T. teams in the service of some high risk search and arrest warrants. It is further recognized that the primary agency securing the warrant should retain the authority and responsibility to serve the warrant and determine the need for the use of S.W.A.T.

## NOTIFICATION

When the primary agency secures a warrant outside their own jurisdiction and it is determined S.W.A.T. is needed, the following procedures should be followed:

- A. The primary agency case investigator, or supervisor in charge, shall notify the Watch Commander of the agency where the warrant is to be served (hereinafter "secondary agency") of the date, time and location of the warrant service, and the nature of the investigation. This notification should be made within a reasonable time period prior to the anticipated service of the warrant.
- B. The primary agency S.W.A.T. Commander (or secondary agency Watch Commander) shall notify the secondary agency S.W.A.T. Commander, as soon as practical, that S.W.A.T. will be serving a high risk search or arrest warrant in the secondary agency's jurisdiction. The notification should include the date, time and location of the warrant service, and the nature of the investigation including the level of risk involved. Final approval for use of the primary agency S.W.A.T. team shall rest with the administration, the Watch Commander or S.W.A.T. Commander of the secondary agency.
- C. The secondary agency S.W.A.T. Commander reserves the right to assign a representative from their department to be present or offer assistance during high risk warrant services within their jurisdiction.

## JURISDICTION

Whereupon the primary agency encounters resistance at a search location which results in a barricade situation, hostage taking, shooting or the need for the use of tear gas, the following procedure should be followed:

- A. The primary agency S.W.A.T. team supervisor or commander shall secure an inner perimeter around the location of the incident. The primary agency S.W.A.T. team should limit their response to only that activity necessary to counter an immediate threat to life or property and containment of the scene.
- B. The primary agency S.W.A.T. team supervisor or on-scene commander shall take immediate steps to notify the secondary agency's Watch Commander of the situation which has developed. **The primary agency S.W.A.T. supervisor should also request the secondary agency's S.W.A.T. team to respond to conduct the S.W.A.T. operation and formulate a response to the situation. It is the responsibility of the secondary agency S.W.A.T. team to handle any barricade situation, hostage taking, shooting, use of tear gas or other tactical operation which falls under their jurisdiction. These operations should not be initiated by an outside agency without prior approval from the secondary agency.** The

incident command shall be assumed by the senior official present from the jurisdiction where the incident occurs. The on-scene commander from the outside jurisdiction shall assist in the formulation of response and subsequent investigation. In certain situations, the secondary agency Watch Commander and/or S.W.A.T. Commander may designate the on site, outside agency S.W.A.T. team to handle the emergency operation. The secondary agency administration reserves the right to take full command of any barricaded incident or emergency high risk situation.

