

# Emergency Response Team

## 404.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Best Practice MODIFIED NYSLEAP- 8.7 - 43.6

This policy provides guidelines for the specialized support of the Emergency Response Team (ERT) in handling critical field operations where special tactical deployment methods, intense negotiations, or other critical incidents that are beyond the capacity of field officers.

The Authority to activate and utilize an Emergency Response Team is a matter of critical concern, both to the public and to the law enforcement community, and is a serious responsibility that must be exercised judiciously. Members of the Syracuse Police Department are obligated to guide their actions according to their training and this policy whose core principles include commitment to the utmost respect for the sanctity and dignity of human life, employment of de-escalation whenever safe and feasible, the duty to intervene when witnessing the use of excessive force, the preservation and advancement of community trust and public safety, and adherence to constitutional principles. In granting officers the authority to use specialized resources, like the Emergency Response Team, the Department acknowledges its responsibility to train, monitor, and evaluate officers to ensure adherence to the authorizations and limitations set forth in this policy.

### 404.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Best Practice MODIFIED NYSLEAP- 8.7 - 43.6 (C)

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Emergency Response Team (ERT)** - A team of specialized units which include the SWAT Unit, Crisis Response Unit, Hazardous Devices Unit, Chemical Emergency Response Unit, Syracuse Police Peer Support Unit, Public Order Unit, and any other Departmental Units deemed necessary to accomplish a specific critical mission.

**Special Weapons and Tactics Unit (SWAT)** - A specialized tactical unit equipped and trained to perform high risk operations.

**Crisis Response Unit (CRU)** - A specialized unit trained to respond to critical incidents that involve hostage takings, suicidal subjects, and armed barricaded suspects, whose mission is to communicate with persons in crisis and attempt to conclude the incident without the use of violence.

**Hazardous Devices Unit** - A specialized unit trained in the detection of explosives and explosive devices and the responsibility to render them safe.

**Chemical Emergency Response Unit (CERU)** - A specialized unit trained and equipped to respond to and deal with hazardous chemicals and devices found in clandestine laboratories.

**Syracuse Police Peer Support Unit** - A unit comprised of personnel who have received specialized training in providing peer supports services to sworn members of the Department.

**Squad** - A subdivision of a unit.

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**Surveillance** - The secretive, continuous or periodic observation (above and beyond ordinary police operations) of persons, vehicles, places, or objects for the purpose of obtaining information regarding the identity and activities of individuals committing crimes.

**Raid** - The lawful invasion of a building or locality for the purpose of apprehending a suspect, seizing evidence, or recovering stolen property.

**Stakeout** - The tactical deployment of officers in anticipation of the commission of a crime at a specific location or the apprehension of a fugitive.

**Advance Reconnaissance** - The scouting of areas to be utilized in the deployment of personnel and the resultant plan of security for each.

**Public Order Unit** - A specialized unit trained in crowd control and dispersal tactics for deployment in spontaneous events that are unexpected or unknown that require specialty crowd control equipment and tactics, incidents that have potential for civil disorder or addressing events that are expected to involve large-scale or serious civil disorder.

#### **404.2 POLICY**

Best Practice MODIFIED NYSLEAP- 8.7 - 43.6, 43.6 (A)

It shall be the policy of the Syracuse Police Department to maintain an ERT to conduct special operations in order to safeguard the lives of officers and the public, and to control and safely resolve high-risk incidents. The Syracuse Police Department will provide the equipment, manpower and training necessary to maintain such teams. The ERT should develop sufficient resources to perform the following basic operational functions:

- (a) Command and control
- (b) Containment
- (c) Entry/apprehension/rescue
- (d) Recovery and disposal of explosives

#### **404.3 MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION**

Best Practice MODIFIED NYSLEAP- 8.7 - 43.6 (E)

The Chief of Police shall have the ultimate authority and responsibility for all special operations and the activities of the Emergency Response Team. The Chief of Police shall, when necessary:

- (a) Appoint officers to positions with the Emergency Response Team.
- (b) Authorize and approve special operations plans and training exercises.

The Chief of Police shall appoint a Deputy Chief who shall serve as the ERT Commander.

[See procedure for ORGANIZATION](#)

[ERT Organization and Structure](#)

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#### 404.3.1 UNIT COMMANDERS

Best Practice MODIFIED NYSLEAP- 8.7 - 43.6 (E)

Emergency Response Team Units will be under the direction of designated Unit Commanders, who shall be selected by the ERT Commander.

The primary responsibility of the Unit Commanders are to oversee the operation of their teams, which includes deployment, training, first-line supervisor participation and other duties as directed by the ERT Commander.

[See procedure for UNIT COMMANDERS](#)

#### 404.4 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS

Agency Content

It shall be the responsibility of each Emergency Response Team member to:

- (a) Respond to high-risk and critical incident situations as directed.
  1. ERT personnel must be fit for duty and available at all times of the day or night, when on call.
  2. ERT personnel must keep with them at all times their assigned pager/cell phone.
  3. ERT personnel must notify their Unit Commander, in advance, of any periods of unavailability.
- (b) Attend specialized training sessions as scheduled.
- (c) Members are required to report to their Unit Commander any significant physical or psychological problem or issue that might compromise their ability to perform an assignment.
- (d) Maintain assigned equipment in a high state of readiness.
- (e) Perform and function as a highly disciplined team.
- (f) Resolve high-risk situations safely and effectively.
- (g) Act and perform duties pursuant to all applicable laws and in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Department.
- (h) Perform all regularly assigned duties in an above average manner.
- (i) Notify their Unit Commander of any change of phone or pager number(s).

SWAT members shall maintain a high level of psychological and physical fitness.

SWAT members shall qualify with all team weapons at a minimum of 1 time annually.

#### 404.5 READINESS

Best Practice MODIFIED

An operational readiness assessment should be conducted to determine the type and extent of ERT missions and operations appropriate to this department. The assessment should consider

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the capabilities, training and limitations of the ERT and should be reviewed annually by the ERT Commander or the Unit Commanders.

#### 404.5.1 EQUIPMENT INSPECTIONS

Best Practice MODIFIED NY\_CALEA6.13 - 53.1.1 (a), 53.1.1 (b), 53.1.1 (c), 53.1.1 (d)

Unit Commanders shall appoint a team supervisor to perform operational readiness inspections of all ERT equipment at least quarterly. Any deficiencies noted during the inspection should be forwarded to the ERT Commander in writing. The inspections will include personal equipment issued to members of the ERT, operational equipment maintained in the ERT facility and equipment maintained or used in ERT vehicles.

#### 404.5.2 MULTIJURISDICTIONAL OPERATIONS

Best Practice

The ERT, including any relevant specialized teams and supporting resources, should develop protocols, agreements, memorandums of understanding (MOUs) or working relationships to support multijurisdictional or regional responses.

- (a) If it is anticipated that multijurisdictional ERT operations will regularly be conducted, multi-agency and multidisciplinary joint training exercises should occur.
- (b) Members of the Syracuse Police Department ERT shall operate under the policies, procedures and command of the Syracuse Police Department when working in a multi-agency situation.

#### 404.6 PROCEDURES

Best Practice MODIFIED

Situations that necessitate the need for an ERT 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.

##### 404.6.1 ORGANIZATIONAL PROCEDURES

Best Practice NY\_CALEA6.13 - 46.2.1 (f)

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

- (a) Specific missions the ERT is capable of performing.
- (b) ERT 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.

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- (h) Out-of-jurisdiction response.
- (i) Specialized functions and supporting resources.

#### 404.6.2 OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

**Best Practice** **MODIFIED**

The Department shall develop a separate written set of operational procedures in accordance with the determination of the ERT'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 ERT members and outline negotiation, tactical and officer safety issues, they are not included within this policy.

The operational procedures should include, at a minimum:

- (a) Designation of members who are responsible for developing an operational or tactical plan prior to, and/or during ERT operations (time permitting).
  1. All ERT members should have an understanding of operational planning.
  2. ERT training should include planning for both spontaneous and planned events.
  3. ERT planning should incorporate medical emergency contingency plans as part of the ERT operational plan.
- (b) Plans for mission briefings conducted prior to an operation, unless circumstances require immediate deployment.
  1. Where applicable, briefings should include the specialized teams, certified tactical dispatchers and other supporting personnel.
- (c) Protocols for a sustained operation to be developed that may include relief, rotation of members and augmentation of personnel and resources.
- (d) A generic checklist to be worked through prior to initiating a tactical action as a means of conducting a threat assessment to determine the appropriate response and resources necessary, including the use of the ERT.
- (e) Roles for the negotiations team and negotiators, and other ERT Units, where appropriate.
- (f) A standard method of determining whether a warrant should be regarded as high risk.
- (g) A method for deciding how best to serve a high-risk warrant with all reasonably foreseeable alternatives being reviewed in accordance with risk/benefit criteria prior to selecting the method of response.
- (h) Protocols for post-incident scene management, including:
  1. Documentation of the incident.
  2. Transition to investigations and/or other bureaus.
  3. Debriefing after every deployment of the ERT.

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- (a) After-action team debriefing provides evaluation and analysis of critical incidents, affords the opportunity for individual and team assessments, helps to identify training needs and reinforces sound risk management practices.
- (b) Such debriefing should not be conducted until involved members have had the opportunity to individually complete necessary reports or provide formal statements.
- (c) In order to maintain candor and a meaningful exchange, debriefing will generally not be recorded.
- (d) When appropriate, debriefing should include specialized teams and supporting or assisting personnel.
  - (i) A sound risk management analysis.
  - (j) Standardization of equipment deployed.

#### 404.7 OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

**Best Practice** **MODIFIED** NY\_CALEA6.13 - 46.2.1 (b) NYSLEAP- 8.7 - 43.6 (C)

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

##### 404.7.1 APPROPRIATE USE

**Best Practice** **MODIFIED**

Incidents that may result in the activation of the ERT 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) High-risk warrant executions.
- (f) Surveillances / stakeouts.
- (g) Crowd control / demonstrations.
- (h) Large scale area searches.
- (i) VIP / Dignitary protection.
- (j) Disaster response.
- (k) Civil disorders.

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- (l) Civil defense emergencies.
- (m) Confirmed sniper activity.
- (n) Suspected clandestine laboratories.
- (o) 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 ERT units from another agency must be approved by the Chief of Police or Deputy Chief. Deployment of the Syracuse Police Department ERT in response to requests by other agencies must be authorized by the Chief of Police or Deputy Chief.

#### 404.7.2 ON-SCENE DETERMINATION AND NOTIFICATION

Best Practice MODIFIED NY\_CALEA6.13 - 46.2.1 (c)

The supervisor-in-charge at the scene of a particular event will be designated as the Incident Commander and will assess whether the ERT is to respond to the scene. With input from the Incident Commander, final determination will be made by the Chief of Police or authorized designee, who shall then notify the ERT Commander. If the ERT Commander is unavailable, then a specialized team supervisor shall be notified.

The Incident Commander should brief the ERT 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.
- (j) Any other assets or resources at the scene including other involved agencies.
- (k) Any other important facts critical to the immediate situation.

The ERT Commander or team supervisor shall then follow current callout procedures. A current mobilization list shall be maintained within CNYLeads on the Syracuse Police Information page under notification lists, at the front desk of the PSB, and at the Onondaga County 911 Center.

The on scene Patrol Commander will notify the Uniform Chief as soon as practicable.

[See procedure for ACTIVATION AND DEPLOYMENT](#)

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#### 404.7.3 FIELD PERSONNEL RESPONSIBILITIES

**Best Practice** NY\_CALEA6.13 - 46.2.1 (a) NYSLEAP- 8.7 - 58.2 (B)

While waiting for the ERT 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 ERT 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.

#### 404.7.4 ON-SCENE COMMAND RESPONSIBILITIES

**Best Practice** **MODIFIED** NY\_CALEA6.13 - 46.2.1 (d)

Upon arrival of the ERT at the scene, the Incident Commander shall brief the ERT Commander and/or Unit Commanders. Upon review, it will be the ERT Commander's decision, with input from the Incident Commander, whether to deploy the ERT. Once the ERT Commander authorizes deployment, the ERT Commander or their authorized designee will be responsible for the tactical response, negotiations, or other ERT related function. The Incident Commander shall continue to supervise the command post operation, outer perimeter security, evacuation and media access and will support the ERT. The Incident Commander and ERT Commander or their authorized designee shall maintain direct communication at all times.

#### 404.7.5 COMMUNICATIONS WITH ERT MEMBERS

**Best Practice** **MODIFIED**

All persons who are non-ERT members should refrain from any non-emergency contact or interference with any ERT member during active negotiations. ERT operations require the utmost in concentration by involved members and, as a result, no one should interrupt or communicate with ERT members directly. All non-emergency communications shall be channeled through the appropriate ERT supervisor or their authorized designee.



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#### **404.8 ERT ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES**

**Best Practice** **MODIFIED**

The ERT was established to provide a skilled and trained team for deployment to events that require specialized skills and tactics, and to conduct special operations in order to safeguard the lives of officers and the public to control and safely resolve high-risk incidents.

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

##### **404.8.1 SELECTION OF ERT MEMBERS**

**Best Practice** **MODIFIED** **NY\_CALEA6.13 - 46.2.2**

Assignment to the Emergency Response Team is voluntary. The ERT Commander or their designee will announce position vacancies within the team to members of the Department by e-mail or memorandum. Members interested in volunteering for appointment shall respond to that e-mail or memorandum as requested. The memorandum should explain the member's reason for volunteering for the team, and cite any special skills or abilities the member possesses.

[See procedure for ERT MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND APPOINTMENT](#)

##### **404.8.2 ERT EVALUATION**

**Best Practice** **MODIFIED**

Continual evaluation of a team member's performance and efficiency as it relates to the positive operation of the team shall be conducted by the team supervisor. Performance and efficiency levels, established by the team supervisor, will be met and maintained by all team members. Any member of the negotiation team who performs or functions at a level less than satisfactory shall be subject to dismissal from the team.

#### **404.9 UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT**

**Best Practice** **NY\_CALEA6.13 - 46.2.3**

ERT 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.

##### **404.9.1 EQUIPMENT**

**Best Practice** **MODIFIED** **NYSLEAP- 8.7 - 43.6 (F)**

ERT specialized teams from this department should be adequately equipped to meet the specific missions identified by the Department.

[See procedure for EQUIPMENT](#)

##### **404.9.2 FIREARMS**

**Best Practice**

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

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#### 404.10 TRAINING

Best Practice **MODIFIED** NY\_CALEA6.13 - 33.6.2

Officers selected for the SWAT team shall receive specialized training, as detailed in the SWAT Administrative Manual, and in accordance with applicable training standards to prepare them for special operations.

Officers selected for CRU shall receive initial training that shall include at a minimum:

- (a) The FBI Hostage/Crisis Negotiator School and/or a DCJS approved Hostage/Crisis Negotiation School.
  - 1. After successful completion of the FBI Hostage/Crisis Negotiator School, CRU members will train a minimum of 8 hours per month, 12 times per year.

Officers selected for the Hazardous Devices Unit shall receive initial training that shall include at a minimum:

- (a) The US Army/FBI Hazardous Devices School.
  - 1. Unit members will complete a minimum of 24 hours of proficiency training, at the unit level, for basic skills and use of required safety equipment and tools, per month.
    - (a) This training will include 8 hours of Hazmat training annually.
  - 2. Unit members will also complete a minimum of 40 hours of explosive related training (e.g. seminars, planned exercises, symposiums, conferences), annually.

Officers selected for CERU shall receive initial training that shall include at a minimum:

- (a) The United States Department of Justice Drug Enforcement Administration Clandestine Laboratory Investigation/Safety Certification Program.
  - 1. Selected members must be able to wear full face mask/self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) and chemical/fire resistant clothing while conducting strenuous work in makeshift laboratories that are uncontrolled, poorly ventilated, hot, humid, and highly unstable.

Officers selected for the Syracuse Police Peer Support Unit shall receive training that shall include at a minimum:

- (a) A certified basic Individual/Group Crisis Intervention and Peer Support Course.
  - 1. Selected members will train, at a minimum, 4 times per year.

Officers selected for the Public Order Unit shall receive specialized training, as detailed in the Public Order Unit Procedural Guide, to prepare them for operational call outs.

- (a) Selected members will train, at a minimum, 4 times per year.

The ERT Commander shall conduct an annual ERT training needs assessment to ensure that training correlates to the team's capabilities and department policy. ERT Training shall be conducted in accordance with applicable accreditation standards.

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See procedure for UNIT COMMANDER AND TEAM MEMBER TRAINING RESPONSIBILITIES

#### 404.10.1 TRAINING SAFETY

Best Practice MODIFIED NY\_CALEA6.13 - 33.6.2

Use of a designated safety officer should be considered for all tactical training.

#### 404.10.2 INITIAL TRAINING

Best Practice NY\_CALEA6.13 - 33.6.2 NYSLEAP- 8.7 - 33.3

Tactical and negotiation team members and team supervisors should not be deployed until successful completion of a basic ERT course or its equivalent that has been approved by this department.

- (a) To avoid unnecessary or redundant training, previous training completed by members may be considered equivalent when the hours and content or topics meet or exceed requirements determined by the Department.
- (b) Untrained members may be used in a support or training capacity.

#### 404.10.3 UPDATE/REFRESHER TRAINING

Best Practice MODIFIED NY\_CALEA6.13 - 33.6.2 NYSLEAP- 8.7 - 33.3

ERT personnel should complete update or refresher training as required.

#### 404.10.4 MANAGEMENT TRAINING

Best Practice NY\_CALEA6.13 - 33.6.2 NYSLEAP- 8.7 - 33.3

Command and executive personnel are encouraged to attend training for managing the ERT functions at the organizational level. This is to ensure that those who provide active oversight at the scene understand the purpose and capabilities of these specialized teams.

Command personnel who may assume incident command responsibilities should attend a tactical commander or critical incident commander course or its equivalent that has been approved by this department.

#### 404.10.5 SCENARIO-BASED TRAINING

Best Practice NY\_CALEA6.13 - 33.6.2 NYSLEAP- 8.7 - 33.3

ERT specialized teams should participate in scenario-based training that simulates the critical field operations environment. Such training is an established method of improving performance during an actual deployment.

#### 404.10.6 TRAINING DOCUMENTATION

Best Practice MODIFIED NYSLEAP- 8.7 - 33.3

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Individual and team training shall be documented and records maintained by the individual ERT Unit Commanders. Individual ERT Unit share drives shall be maintained with documentation and records of all team training.

## Attachments

**ERT.pdf**

