

# CODE OF MARYLAND REGULATIONS (COMAR)

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Title 12 DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL  
SERVICES

**Subtitle 04 POLICE TRAINING AND STANDARDS COMMISSION**

**Chapter 08 Special Tactical Response**

Authority: Public Safety Article, §§3-208;  
Annotated Code of Maryland

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## **12.04.08.01**

### **.01 – Purpose**

The purpose of this chapter is to establish minimum procedural and training requirements for members of a special tactical response team and a no-knock warrant service operation.

## **12.04.08.02**

### **.02 – Definitions**

A. In this chapter, the following terms have the meanings indicated.

B. Terms Defined.

(1) “**Activate**” means to put police officers who are members of a special tactical response team or who are participating in a no-knock warrant service operation on notice of potential deployment for an unusually dangerous or potentially violent situation.

(2) “**After-action report**” means a document to be completed following activation and deployment of a special tactical response team or a no-knock warrant service operation that includes, at minimum, the type of deployment, persons deployed, the location deployed to, information about suspects, witnesses, victims, or others, a synopsis of the event, and a conclusion.

(3) **Commission.**

(a) “**Commission**” means the Police Training and Standards Commission or a representative authorized to act on behalf of the Commission.

(b) “**Commission**” includes all references to the Police Training Commission, now known as the Police Training and Standards Commission.

(4) “**Competencies**” means the capabilities of the team members to conduct special tactical responses based on tactical abilities, training, and resources.

(5) “**Deployment**” means that a team has taken a tactical approach to resolving a law enforcement matter that exceeds the duties of traditional police officers.

(6) “**Documented training**” means a permanent record of training that includes the:

(a) Curriculum;

(b) List of instructors;

(c) Record of attendance; and

(d) If administered, test and examination scores.

(7) “**Law enforcement agency**” has the meaning stated in Public Safety Article, §3-201, Annotated Code of Maryland.

(8) “**No-knock warrant service**” means a law enforcement warrant service operation in which a police officer does not announce the police officer’s presence prior to obtaining entrance to a premises.

(9) “**Special tactical response**” means a planned, strategic, tactical response to resolve critical incidents that may exceed the capabilities of traditional law enforcement officers and investigative unit personnel.

**(10) Special Tactical Response Team.**

(a) “Special tactical response team” means two or more police officers, who have been specially trained, and have the ability to execute strategic responses to resolve critical incidents that may exceed the capabilities of traditional law enforcement officers and investigative unit personnel.

(b) “Special tactical response team” may include, but is not limited to, a Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team as defined under Public Safety Article, §3-201(g), Annotated Code of Maryland.

**12.04.08.03**

**.03 – Special Tactical Response Team**

A. To increase the likelihood of safely resolving critical situations that may exceed the capabilities of traditional law enforcement officers and investigative units, a law enforcement agency seeking to establish a special tactical response team that may be activated and deployed shall:

(1) Develop written policies and procedures for special tactical responses that:

(a) Are designed to meet the law enforcement agency’s operational needs;

(b) Are consistent with the requirements set forth in this regulation; and

(c) Address, at minimum the following policy topics:

(i) Types of missions requiring special tactical response;

(ii) Team organization and function;

(iii) Personnel selection and retention criteria;

(iv) Training requirements;

(v) Competencies;

(vi) Procedures for activation and deployment;

(vii) If applicable, multi-agency cooperation and response;

(viii) If applicable, criteria for response to other jurisdictions; and

(ix) Specialized tactical functions, as applicable;

(2) Ensure team members successfully complete the individual and team training requirements established in Regulation .04A of this chapter prior to initial deployment; and

(3) Ensure special tactical response teams:

(a) Conduct an assessment of the tactical needs presented by the circumstances present in each unique situation; and

(b) Adhere to the training and deployment requirements as set forth in this chapter and according to agency policy and procedures.

B. A special tactical response team shall be composed of police officers with the advanced tactical training and expertise who are able to engage responsibly in the operational functions described in §C of this regulation and shall, at minimum, include:

(1) A tactical commander of supervisory rank who has overall responsibility for team personnel, training, operations, deployment, and after-action documentation;

(2) A team leader who is a team member of senior team status or rank, reports directly to the tactical commander, and develops and executes tactical response training and operations; and

(3) Team members who provide specialized law enforcement capabilities to contain, prevent, or respond to critical and high-risk situations.

C. A special tactical response team’s operational functions include, but are not limited to:

(1) Tactical command and control;

(2) Perimeter control and containment;

(3) Entry and apprehension; and

(4) Hostage rescue.

D. A police officer's assignment to a special tactical response team may be a full-time position or designated as a collateral-duty.

E. A special tactical response team may include police officers from a single law enforcement agency or police officers from multiple law enforcement agencies.

F. Each regional or multi-agency special tactical response team shall develop the appropriate agreements, protocols, and procedures for interagency cooperation that:

- (1) Delineate, establish, and specify a law enforcement chain of command, operational control, duties and responsibilities of supporting units, and joint training requirements; and
- (2) Specify which agency is charged with jurisdiction in the event of a criminal investigation involving the actions of a team member, such as an officer-involved shooting.

#### **12.04.08.04**

##### **.04 - Minimum Training Requirements for a Special Tactical Response.**

A. Initial Tactical Response Training Standards.

(1) Prior to initial deployment, each new team leader or member shall attend and successfully complete a Commission-approved course of study that includes:

- (a) Philosophy of special tactical response operations;
- (b) Tactical response theory and concepts;
- (c) Overview of individual and team equipment;
- (d) Operational planning;
- (e) Overview of specialized tactical response functions;
- (f) Command post operations;
- (g) Individual and team movement;
- (h) Basic entry and search techniques;
- (i) Chemical agents and deployment;
- (j) Less lethal munitions and deployment;
- (k) Diversionary device usage;
- (l) Crisis negotiation and de-escalation skills;
- (m) Individual and team firearms training;
- (n) Purpose and intent of warrant service;
- (o) Problem solving situations in a scenario-based learning environment; and
- (p) Legal requirements.

(2) A Commission-approved course of study for initial special tactical response shall include a minimum of 40 hours of classroom instruction, written examination, and practical exercise that meets the standards established in §A(1) of this regulation.

(3) Successful completion of a Commission-approved course of study for initial special tactical response requires a police officer to obtain a minimum passing score of 80 percent in all classes.

B. Continuing Quarterly and Annual Special Tactical Response Training Standards.

(1) Quarterly, each team leader and member shall complete a minimum of 24 hours of documented training in one or more of the following special tactical core competencies:

- (a) Weapons, munitions, and equipment;
- (b) Individual and team movement;
- (c) Decision making; and
- (d) Specialized tactical functions.

(2) Each special tactical response team shall successfully complete a minimum of 40 hours of documented, team-based training over a 12-month period, with the full team, consisting of lectures, drills, operational risk assessments, and scenario-based exercises.

- (3) Training hours obtained during a team-based training as specified in §B(2) of this regulation may be applied to an individual team member's quarterly training requirement if the team-based training:
- (a) Covers one or more of the topics identified in §B(1) of this regulation; and
  - (b) Occurs during the quarter for which the team member is seeking credit.
- (4) If a team member maintains one or more specialized team positions, such as deliberate hostage rescue, or integrated tactical response K-9, the team member shall participate in additional documented training that is mandated and specific to each specialized position.

**C. Special Tactical Response Training Requirements for a Tactical Commander.**

- (1) A tactical commander shall attend and successfully complete a documented tactical commander course within 1 year of assignment to a special tactical response team.
- (2) Biennially, a tactical commander shall successfully complete a minimum of 16 hours of one or more of the following training topics:
- (a) Review of criminal incidents and tactical response operations;
  - (b) Legal issues;
  - (c) Mutual aid procedures;
  - (d) Deployment and guidelines for deployment;
  - (e) Hostage rescue;
  - (f) Tactical team operations;
  - (g) Command and control;
  - (h) Command post operations;
  - (i) Tactical operation procedures;
  - (j) Tactical components and capabilities;
  - (k) Tactical considerations and mission; and
  - (l) Training scenarios and problem-solving simulations.

**12.04.08.05**

**.05 - No-Knock Warrant Service**

A. To increase the likelihood of safely resolving a high-risk warrant service operation, a law enforcement agency shall ensure that a police officer conducting no-knock warrant service:

- (1) Successfully completes the minimum training requirements established in Regulation .06 of this chapter prior to service of a no-knock warrant; and
- (2) Adheres to the law enforcement agency's internal policy and procedures.

B. Regardless of whether a judicial officer has authorized a police officer to enter a premises without knocking and announcing the police officer's presence prior to entry, a police officer shall, based upon exigent circumstances existing at the time of the entry determine whether such an announcement:

- (1) Is reasonable;
- (2) Increases the risk or danger to the police officer and others; or
- (3) Inhibits the effective investigation of a crime by enabling the destruction or tampering of evidence.

**12.04.08.06**

**.06 - Minimum Training Standards for Police Officers Involved in a No-Knock Warrant Service.**

A. Prior to initial deployment in a no-knock warrant service operation a police officer shall successfully complete a Commission-approved no-knock warrant service course of study that includes:

- (1) The purpose and intent of warrant service;

- (2) Tactical response theory and concepts;
- (3) Operational planning;
- (4) Basic entry and search techniques;
- (5) Crisis negotiation and de-escalation skills;
- (6) Legal requirements;
- (7) Problem solving situations in a scenario-based learning environment; and
- (8) Multi-agency, mutual aid warrant services procedures.

B. A Commission-approved no-knock warrant service course shall include a minimum of 24 hours of instruction.

C. Successful completion of a no-knock warrant service course requires a police officer to obtain a minimum passing score of 80 percent in all classes.

#### **12.04.08.07**

##### **.07 – Deployment**

A. Prior to each deployment a special tactical response team or police officer involved in no-knock warrant service shall:

- (1) Ensure compliance with all applicable training standards within this chapter;
- (2) Conduct a documented threat and risk assessment to determine the appropriate response and resources necessary for the mission; and
- (3) Develop a mission-specific operational plan and orders.

B. After-Action Debriefing and Report.

- (1) A tactical commander, or senior member, shall conduct a debriefing of each incident in which a special tactical response or police officers involved in no-knock warrant operations were deployed.
- (2) A tactical commander shall prepare, appropriately disseminate, and retain an after-action report in accordance with agency policy and Maryland law.