

**City of Oakdale
OAKDALE POLICE DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF**

**Memorandum
*Working together to improve the quality of life in Oakdale***

Date: October 28, 2001

To: Lieutenant Larry Parshall
Sergeant Vern Gladney

From: Steve Krull
Chief of Police

Subject: Tac Team Paramedic/EMTs

As you will recall, I queried the state's police chiefs relative to what are the current practices in the field relative to the use of paramedics and/or EMTs with tactical teams. Out of 40 responses there was a variety of perspectives and practices. Hopefully, this summary will capture the overall view. There were many variables involved and the data was, not surprisingly, difficult to categorize because of the overlapping type of information.

Paramedics and/or EMTs Assigned to Teams

Roughly half the teams indicated they had paramedic or EMT qualified individuals assigned in some capacity to the tactical team. The way these individuals were utilized varied. This includes officers being cross trained with these skills, firefighters or other medical workers being trained as reserves and simply having them attached to the team. While the rest of the teams may not have had personnel specifically assigned, almost all indicated they would have paramedics and EMTs staged close by in those situations where appropriate.

Regular or Reserve Officers as Paramedics and / or EMTs

Just over 25% of the teams had officers sent to the paramedic / EMT training or had their medical personnel (firefighter or ambulance personnel with the appropriate medical training) complete reserve officer training. It was not always clear, but it would appear that those who were reserves also had to participate in the regular reserve program in addition to their tactical assignment.

It appeared to me in reviewing the written responses and, in some cases, follow-up phone discussions that in almost every case as depicted above, there was some sort of prior tactical experience (e.g. former military, former officer, etc.). It was also my impression that if the non-sworn individuals did not have the previous tactical interests, the Tac Team Commanders would be less supportive of the personnel being armed or used in any capacity other than medical.

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Tac Team Medical

Tac Team Paramedics and / or EMTs Armed

The only time the paramedics and / or EMTs were armed was when they were regular or reserve officers, cross trained for the medical trauma function or vice-versa. This occurred in approximately 25% of the time. The weapons were for self-protection in extreme cases and the individuals were not intended to be used for any tactically pro-active type duties.

Use When Armed

The majority of use centered on being on the inner perimeter and available to treat injured officers or suspects as quickly as possible. While the individual circumstances would certainly dictate, this treatment would normally be after the injured were removed from a "hot zone" to a "warm" or "cool zone". There was some participation in officer rescue teams but, again, these individuals were primarily for medical uses and armed only for defensive purposes.

Use When Not Armed

Unarmed medical persons assigned to the teams were usually on, or near, the inner perimeter and available for immediate medical treatment if necessary. They also were expected, in some cases, to participate in rescue scenarios. When doing so there were personnel assigned for their personal security so they could focus on their primary mission.

Other Observations

It was clear that whether armed or not, medical personnel assigned to the teams (not simply standing by or "staged") should train with the other members and be familiar with the tactics and personnel. Even unarmed personnel should have some amount of basic firearms training with the types of weapons used by the team. This, so they will be comfortable being around them and be able to render them safe should the need arise.

Summary

As was expected, this issue has some very passionate positions on both sides of the issue. We should take this information and, given our own unique circumstances and scenario, make the policy decision on how we will proceed.

I will schedule a meeting with this group to facilitate the process. Should you have any questions prior to that time do not hesitate to contact me.

cc: Lieutenant Jenkins, Sergeant Rosa