

Rapid Tactical Response OR "TAC Light"

**Chris Summers, Team Leader
Tallahassee Police Department**

I have been a negotiator with the Tallahassee Police Department's Tactical Apprehension and Control Team (TAC) since 1994. Our team is a part-time team. During my involvement with our team I have noticed a change in the response of our tactical team. Initially, our TAC team would respond after a request from the patrol division watch commander. The call-out would be a formal ordeal. Upon arrival of the team members, on average an hour, there would be a briefing to provide members with the basic facts known by the incident commander at the time, followed by deployment of the team. In many cases there would be an immediate deployment of a scout team or certain team members to fill an immediate need. However full deployment would only occur after a briefing.

Deployment would involve entry and breakout operators replacing inner-perimeter positions previously held by uniformed patrol officers. Snipers would assume their positions and the crisis negotiation team would begin a formal information gathering process and establish communications with the subject. If communication with a subject was already in progress, the Crisis Negotiation Team (CNT) may choose to supplement the person engaged in contact. The TAC Team Commander would make an announcement that the TAC Team has assumed control of the inner-perimeter. The resolution of the incident would generally come within a few hours.

Present Day Tactical Response

The tactical team commander is notified of a high- risk incident. The tactical team leader is notified and all on-duty TAC Team members respond to the incident. The team commander must make a decision to continue with the scaled back response or will he need a full scale call-out. Most times the "TAC Light" has solved the problem.

In my opinion, the "TAC Light" response has been an answer to many needs that face our department. Nationally, we have observed the necessity for law enforcement to have rapid response plan for certain high-risk situations. The "TAC Light" is one way to have a rapid response team in place to deal with the situation or provide a higher level of trained personal on-scene to lead the uniformed response. The "TAC Light" is usually utilized for suicide response and barricaded subjects. The crisis negotiators assigned to the team respond accordingly and assume their roles. It is a policy of the CNT that a negotiator does not communicate with a subject alone. The tradition has been that at least one secondary negotiator respond. I think any of the readers will understand our reasoning.

The Challenge

The Challenge for our CNT during the "TAC Light" is to be able to effectively function with fewer numbers. Our CNT is staffed with eight negotiators and one team leader. To date, there is usually at least one negotiator on duty at any point during the day. Most of the team members have an investigative assignment and work during the day or afternoon. During the last four to five "TAC Light" incidents, a discussion with the CNT members have concluded that at the bare minimum, three negotiators must respond to any incident. One negotiator to act as the primary, the second negotiator to act as the back up or coach and the third negotiator to act as the intelligence coordinator.

It has been my experience, that during any call-out we have responded to, we have seldom had too many negotiators. Vacations, days off, etc. usually place us at a disadvantage. We have found that a minimum of three negotiators for a "TAC Light" and five negotiators for a full call-out are minimum staff. Before I close, let me give you one last detail. Our TAC Team is one team divided into smaller units or sub-teams. The sniper team consists of seven officers with a team leader. The entry team consists of fourteen members and a team leader. The logistics team is comprised of two officers and the EOD team has two members. As noted above, there are seven negotiators and a team leader. There is an assistant team commander and a team commander.

The Questions

- Is your team using a "TAC Light" style response?
- How large is your CNT?
- Do your negotiators respond without tactical support?
- How large is your tactical or SWAT team

Please send any comments and questions to me. I can be contacted by phone at 850-891-4552 or e-mail at summersc@mail.ci.tlh.fl.us

Biography

Chris Summers is the Crisis Negotiations Team Leader for the Tallahassee Police Department's Tactical Apprehension and Control Team (**TAC**). Summers is a member of the Florida Association of Hostage Negotiators where he currently serves as the vice-president. Summers has been a police officer since 1985, and is an investigator with the TPD Homicide/Assault Unit.