

**STOCKTON POLICE DEPARTMENT  
GENERAL ORDER**

**EXPLOSIVE BREACHING  
SUBJECT**

**DATE:** July 24, 2013

**NO.:** X-02a

**FROM:** CHIEF ERIC JONES

**TO:** ALL PERSONNEL

**INDEX:** EXPLOSIVE BREACHING

**I. POLICY**

Explosive breaching is a Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team tactical option, employed when a rapid entry or porting of solid barriers is critical to the success of the mission. The Stockton Police Department will use explosive breaching when necessary to resolve high risk situations where other breaching options would place citizens and officers at risk, and where its deployment to gain entry would mitigate that risk.

**II. PROCEDURE**

- A. Explosive breaching shall only be used on direct command from the SWAT Commander, or in the SWAT Commander's absence, the commanding SWAT Sergeant.
- B. The SWAT Commander will keep the Incident Commander fully apprised during major SWAT operations or critical incidents.
- C. Both the SWAT Commander and Incident Commander will ensure the appropriate Deputy Chief is advised during major SWAT operations or critical incidents.
- D. Pre-planned use of explosive breaching shall be cleared by the appropriate Deputy Chief, or the person acting with the authority of the Office of Chief of Police. In the event a situation requires immediate action, and no representative from the Chief's Office is available, the SWAT Commander will make the decision whether to use explosive breaching. The Chief's Office will then be notified as soon as possible.

**III. DEFINITIONS**

- A. EXPLOSIVE BREACH: The positive use of explosive materials to create an opening through a wall, door or barrier to allow access by a tactical/rescue team.
- B. BREACHING CHARGES: The construction of explosive materials created for the specific purpose of using explosives as an industrial breaching tool.
- C. WATER CHARGE: An explosive used to propel water where the force of the water, rather than the explosives, overcomes resistance rather than the explosive itself.
- D. BREACHER: A member of the Department SWAT team or of the Explosives Ordinance Detail, who is trained and certified in the construction, placement, and initiation of explosive breaching devices. A Breacher must have attended an explosive breaching school, have participated in documented breaches and, have demonstrated proficiency in breaching techniques.
- E. ASSISTANT BREACHER: A member of the Department SWAT team or of the Explosives Ordinance Detail designated by the SWAT Commander who works and trains in breaching techniques, and who assists in the placement and initiation of an explosive breaching device when directed by the Breacher.
- F. BREACHING SERGEANT: A member of the SWAT team educated and familiar with explosive breaching techniques who is in charge of the overall breaching program. The Breaching Sergeant is responsible to ensure that all documentation is completed and the program is run safely. The Breaching Sergeant's immediate supervisor during a critical incident is the SWAT Commander.

- G. BREACH AND DELAY: A “breach and delay” situation is an explosive breach where the tactical advantage is gained when a rapid entry is not desirable. The option to use an explosive breach and delay shall be at the discretion of the SWAT Commander.
- H. INCIDENT COMMANDER: The Officer in charge of an incident with command authority.
- I. SWAT COMMANDER: The Lieutenant assigned as the SWAT Commander or a designated SWAT Sergeant in that Lieutenant’s absence.

**IV. BREACHING PROCEDURE**

- A. Explosive breaching shall only be considered after other reasonable methods or procedures have been exhausted or when explosive breaching provides sufficient tactical advantage to justify its use. Explosive breaching shall not be deployed if the risk outweighs any benefit gained.
  - 1. Situations where explosive tactical breaching may be used include, but are not limited, to the following;
    - a. Hostage rescue situations
    - b. Apprehension of barricaded felony suspects where delay is not reasonable
    - c. High risk warrant service operations
    - d. In disasters where explosive breaching could be used to rescue trapped victims
    - e. Other situations deemed necessary by the SWAT Commander.
- B. Whenever possible, scouting and target analysis is a pre-breach responsibility of the Breacher and/or the Assistant Breacher.
- C. Construction of the explosive breaching device varies upon completion of target analysis. Each device is designed, in composition and construction, on the breaching needs, and past training and the experiences of the Breacher.
- D. Prior to setting the explosive breach, the Breacher will present a briefing to the SWAT Commander and all personnel involved in the entry.
- E. Placement of the SWAT Entry Team during the explosive breach will be the responsibility of the SWAT Commander and the SWAT Team Leader who is directly responsible for the group of SWAT Team Officers who would be in proximity to the explosives breach. The SWAT Commander will receive input from the Breacher and the Assistant Breacher. The Breacher will have the final say on the initiation of the explosive breach. If the Breacher determines that the breach would place the entry team in unnecessary danger, the breach will not be conducted.
- F. Each tactical situation will dictate the best initiation sequence of the explosive breach. This may include a verbal countdown by the Breacher, if safety of the personnel in proximity to the breach is not compromised.

**V. CONSIDERATIONS**

- A. Although explosive breaching is a valuable and useful tool, it may not be appropriate in all breaching situations. An explosive breach should not be employed when:
  - 1. The construction of the doors, walls or building cannot reasonably be assessed.
  - 2. Based on known facts the use of explosive breaching would increase the risk of injury to the occupants/victims.
  - 3. There is suspected or confirmed presence of flammable, explosive, or unstable chemicals or other incendiary materials
  - 4. Other means of mechanical breaching techniques (i.e., “Ram,” “Halligan”, etc.) are more effective and would be safer to use.

## **VI. SAFETY PROCEDURES**

- A. All explosives shall remain in control of and stored by members of the Explosives Ordinance Detail when not in use.
  - 1. EMT's and/or Paramedics should be present during all missions where explosive breaching techniques are to be used.
  - 2. The handling and use of explosive materials shall be conducted in a safe and reasonable manner.
  - 3. The Breacher or Assistant Breacher will be in control of the initiating device at all times to prevent unintentional initiation of the breaching charge.
  - 4. The Breacher or Assistant Breacher will be responsible for construction, placement and initiation of the breaching charge.
- B. Using a duel priming initiator system will be standard procedure to insure positive initiation.
- C. All personnel in proximity of the explosive breach will wear proper safety equipment during trainings and missions. This will include, but is not limited, to:
  - 1. Helmet
  - 2. Gloves
  - 3. Eye protection
  - 4. Boots
  - 5. Long sleeved shirt
  - 6. Hearing protection
  - 7. Ballistic vest

## **VII. HANDLING OF MISFIRES**

- A. Handling of misfires and non-functioning breaching charges are the responsibility of the Breacher and Assistant Breacher.
- B. In the event of a misfire of the breaching charge or initiator, the Breacher or Assistant Breacher may elect to re-cock the initiator and fire the device again, unless doing so compromises the safety of tactical personnel.
  - 1. In the event of a second misfire, the Breacher or Assistant Breacher will initiate the pre-planned "entry denial" course of action. If the procedure chosen either dictates the use of a manual tool or a response to an alternate breach point, the breaching charge will be removed and secured by the Breacher or Assistant Breacher as soon as possible.
  - 2. In the event of a failed initiation of a breaching charge in which the firing device functioned properly, movement to an alternate breach location may be immediately considered.
- C. If, after the failed initiation of any charge, it is necessary or considered a tactical advantage to re-attempt a breach at the initial target, several options may be considered:
  - 1. Replace the priming system on the breaching charge.
  - 2. Re-load the initiator, and re-fire.
  - 3. Replace entire charge (including priming system), then re-load the initiator and re-fire.

4. Remove the entire breaching charge from the target to allow the safe deployment of other manual breaching techniques.
- D. A method of allowing remote control removal of the breaching charge will be utilized whenever possible. In all instances, the shock tube shall be removed from the initiator prior to proceeding with a back-up misfire procedure to prevent inadvertent firing of the device.
  - E. The Breacher and Assistant Breacher will be responsible for the security of the removed charge and its subsequent disposition of it.