



SOUTH DAKOTA  DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURE		POLICY NUMBER 300-16	PAGE NUMBER 1 OF 7
		DISTRIBUTION:	<b>Public</b>
		SUBJECT:	Special Teams
RELATED STANDARDS:	<b>ACA 5-ACI: 1A-11, 1D-03, 1D-18</b>	EFFECTIVE DATE:	November 01, 2025
		SUPERSESION:	11/01/2024
DESCRIPTION: Facilities - Security & Management	REVIEW MONTH: September	 Brent Fluke (Oct 31, 2025 08:53:14 CDT) <b>BRENT FLUKE</b> <b>SECRETARY OF CORRECTIONS</b>	

## I. POLICY

It is the policy of the South Dakota Department of Corrections (DOC) to maintain special teams comprised of specially selected, equipped, and trained DOC employees capable of immediately responding to and resolving emergency situations and providing critical incident follow-up. These special teams shall be an integral part of the overall DOC emergency operations plan.

## II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide establish guidelines and procedures for the selection, training and activation of special team and its members.

## III. DEFINITIONS

### **Hostage Negotiation Team (HNT):**

A specially selected and trained volunteer team used to respond to a hostage/crisis situation, barricaded individual(s), individuals identified as needing negotiations response to prevent self-harm that may result in death, who will work towards a successful resolution of the situation.

### **Critical Incident:**

Any situation requiring swift and decisive action involving multiple components in response to, and occurring outside of, the normal course of routine departmental activities, such as riots, hostage situations, assaults, and deaths, or trauma which may cause psychological and/or physical responses.

### **Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT):**

A specially selected and trained volunteer team utilized to support DOC employees, contract workers, or volunteers who have experienced or witnessed traumatic events.

### **Emergency Response Team (ERT):**

A designated, specially selected, and trained volunteer team at each facility or division, utilized to contain and control the immediate crisis area, or to regain control of the area by force.

### **Honor Guard:**

A volunteer team of selected elite staff used to represent the South Dakota Department of Corrections in public relations events. This includes facility groundbreaking, facility dedication, facility decommissioning, funerals, and other community functions.

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## Special Operations Response Team (SORT):

A specially selected and trained volunteer team utilized to provide a centrally organized, highly specialized force to respond quickly and effectively to the most serious of emergencies that threaten the security of any state facility, private prison, or other law enforcement agency through mutual aid agreements.

## IV. PROCEDURES

### 1. Selection:

- A. All special team applicants will complete the *Special Teams Application* (attachment #1). Individuals applying for participation on a special team must complete any additional requirements or interviews, as required by the specific team. ***Correctional officers assigned to an emergency unit have at least one (1) year of corrections and forty (40) hours of specialized training before undertaking their special teams assignments [ACA 5-ACI-1D-18].*** Criteria for membership:
1. All Special Teams:
    - a. The DOC employee must have at least one (1) year of experience in the DOC or receive a positive recommendation from the warden.
    - b. Applicants must not be under corrective or disciplinary action and maintain satisfactory performance in their duties.
    - c. All special team members must be prepared to respond to activation on short notice.
    - d. Applicants cannot be a current member of any other special team.
    - e. The director of Prisons shall retain administrative supervision of the specific teams, to include but not limited to the following:
      - 1) Emergency Response Teams (ERT).
      - 2) Hostage Negotiation Teams (HNT).
  2. Special Operation Response Team (SORT): The DOC employee must:
    - a. Have at least two (2) years of professional correctional experience at the time of the academy; one (1) year of which must have been spent on a facility based ERT or equivalent tactical experience, as determined by the SORT leader.
    - b. Pass the physical condition and performance tests outlined on the *Special Teams Physical Agility Test (PAT)* form (attachment #2). The physical condition test will be directly monitored by the SORT leader. Current and active SORT members who fail the physical condition test will re-test within ninety (90) days. Members who do not meet the physical condition standard will be placed on inactive status and will be given an additional ninety (90) days to re-test. Individuals who do not pass the physical condition test will be removed from the team.
    - c. Complete an oral interview conducted by the SORT leader or designees in order to demonstrate employee's level of knowledge of emergency policies, procedures, and responsibilities.
    - d. Member must successfully complete applicable training which includes a special teams academy and annual physical requirements.
    - e. Maintain current qualification on all use of force and assigned weapon systems.
  3. Emergency Response Team (ERT): The DOC employee must:
    - a. Pass the physical condition and performance tests outlined on the *Special Teams Physical Agility Test (PAT)* form. The physical condition test will be monitored by the facility custody and control manager or designee. Current and active ERT members who fail the physical condition test may retry the test within ninety (90) days. Members who do not meet the physical condition standard will be placed on inactive status and will be given an additional ninety (90) days to re-test. Individuals who do not pass the physical condition test will be removed from the team.
    - b. Complete an oral interview conducted by the facility ERT team leader or designee in order to demonstrate employee's level of knowledge of department emergency policies and procedures.
    - c. Member must successfully complete applicable training which includes a special teams academy and annual physical requirements.
    - d. Maintain current qualification on all use of force and designated weapon systems.
  4. Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT): The DOC employee must:

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- a. Complete an oral interview to demonstrate employee's level of knowledge of department emergency policies and procedures.
  - b. Sign a confidentiality statement.
    - 1) In order to facilitate open communication, a professional level of confidentiality shall be maintained.
    - 2) Information received from or about a DOC employee, contract worker, or volunteer during the course of critical incident debriefing shall not be discussed under any circumstances, or submitted for administrative, disciplinary actions, or criminal investigation. The only exception would be if during the course of the critical incident debriefing, it became apparent that an individual was in imminent danger of harming himself/herself or a third party.
  - c. Member must successfully complete the applicable training requirements.
5. Hostage Negotiations Team (HNT) The DOC employee must:
- a. Member must successfully complete applicable training requirements.
  - b. HNT members must possess the ability to communicate effectively during stressful situations while remaining calm and objective.
  - c. Complete an oral interview conducted by the team leader or designee in order to demonstrate employee's level of knowledge of department emergency policies and procedures.
6. Honor Guard: The DOC employee must:
- a. All applicants must pass a physical skills test to become a member and will be required to learn marching, rifle movements, and flag folding.
  - b. All applicants must pass an oral interview demonstrating their level of knowledge of drill and ceremony as it pertains to the Honor Guard.

## 2. Retention and Suspension:

- A. Retention: In order for DOC employees to retain membership with a special team, they must adhere to the highest standards of integrity and professional performance in their regularly assigned duties, in their private life, and as members of a special team. A minimum two (2) year commitment is expected unless extenuating circumstances exist.
- B. Criteria for Continuing Membership in Special Teams: The member must:
1. Maintain an overall satisfactory performance.
  2. Remain free of any criminal convictions.
  3. Maintain technical proficiencies with all required training.
  4. Display an attitude of willing cooperation, hard work, and continuing professionalism whether assigned to regular duties or when activated as a part of special team.
  5. Attend all activations for training and actual operations, unless needs of assigned facility prevent activations.
  6. Current SORT, ERT, and Honor Guard members must complete a physical fitness assessment, following the Special Teams Physical Agility Test (PAT) form on an annual basis.
  7. A member of a special team who receives a corrective or disciplinary action is subject to suspension for a minimum of six (6) months and possible separation from the team by the director of Prisons or designee. The director of Prisons or designee will document the suspension in a written memorandum by identifying areas of concern, the date suspension begins and any additional information.
  8. Honor Guard – All team members must adhere to attendance requirements.
- C. Separation:
1. The director of Prisons or designee has the authority to remove a special team member.
  2. Voluntary separation requests will be submitted, in writing, to the appropriate team leader and director of Prisons or designee.
  3. Team leaders have the authority to recommend removal via memo to the director of Prisons or designee of team members for failure to meet minimum standards for performance and behavior.

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D. Reinstatement:

1. In the instance a member of a special team voluntarily resigns, is separated by the director of Prisons or designee, or successfully completes a term of suspension in its entirety, the individual will resubmit a special team application and complete the application process for consideration of reinstatement to include approval of the team leader and director of Prisons or designee.

E. Training: The team leaders will prepare an annual training calendar and submit it to the director of Prisons or designee for review and approval prior to July 1st. **DOC employees assigned to special teams are required to participate in annual training. *The training plan is developed, evaluated, and updated based on an annual assessment that identifies current job-related training needs* [ACA 5-ACI-1D-03].**

1. Team leaders will ensure that an Incident After Action Report (attachment #3) is completed and submitted to the director of Prisons or designee within ten (10) days of the conclusion of the activation or training.
2. Special team leaders or designees from each DOC facility will meet quarterly or as needed with the SORT leader for tactical planning, standardization of training and operational procedures, and development of inter-facility support strategies.
3. Special team members must attend all scheduled training. Supervisors will ensure that all special team members are scheduled to attend as required. Failure to attend two (2) training sessions, without a valid reason, may be grounds for suspension or removal from the team.
4. SORT: Each SORT trainee will be required to complete forty (40) hours of training for certification as part of the DOC employee's first-year training program and ninety-six (96) hours annually thereafter.
5. ERT: Each ERT trainee will be required to complete forty (40) hours of training for certification as part of the officer's first-year training program and eighty (80) hours annually, thereafter.
  - a. All training shall be expressed in lesson plan format from SORT and be approved by the associate director of training and staff development. All lesson plans will include safety requirements for each major activity.
  - b. Each ERT member will receive eight (8) hours of mandatory training, per month, for ten (10) months in a fiscal year.
  - c. At a minimum, each ERT team must train with another facility ERT team bi-annually for standardization and mutual aid training.
6. CIRT: CIRT members will complete the sixteen (16) hour mandatory critical incident response training and will receive a minimum of four (4) hours of specialized mandatory training per month.
7. HNT: HNT members will complete a twenty-four (24) hour Hostage Negotiations course that follows the FBI Hostage Negotiations model and receive a minimum of eight (8) hours of specialized mandatory training per month.
8. Honor Guard: All team members will receive eight (8) hours of mandatory training per month. All team members must attend a minimum of ten (10) months in a fiscal year. Failure to attend two (2) training sessions without a valid reason may be grounds for suspension or removal from the team.

F. Special Teams Development:

1. The SORT leader will develop, maintain, and deliver an ongoing program of training and operational guidance to support facility based ERT.
2. The SORT leader will establish and maintain working relationships with ERT teams, HNT teams, and CIRT team leaders to include the scheduling of full-scale activation/training on an annual basis.
3. Special teams are considered to be integral to the overall DOC emergency management plan and shall be trained to operate cohesively in emergency operations.

G. Uniforms/Equipment: Special teams may utilize any equipment approved through the director of Prisons or designee. The following lists are the basic equipment to be issued to each member:

1. **SORT:**
  - a. Battle dress uniform (BDU) shirt with SORT insignia and BDU pants.
  - b. Ballistic helmet.
  - c. Ballistic vest.
  - d. Tactical vest.

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- e. Radio.
  - f. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
  - g. Thigh holster.
  - h. Pistol magazine carrier.
  - i. Cap.
  - j. Pistol-mounted flashlight.
  - k. Chemical agent protective apparatus.
2. **ERT:**
- a. BDU shirt with ERT insignia and BDU pants.
  - b. Riot helmet with face shield or goggles.
  - c. Protective vest.
  - d. Knee/elbow pads.
  - e. Duty belt (black).
  - f. Ready bag.
  - g. Chemical agent protective apparatus.
3. **CIRT:**
- h. Polo shirt with the approved CIRT emblem.
  - a. BDU pants.
  - b. A black jacket with the approved CIRT emblem on the front of the jacket.
4. **HNT:** Individual team equipment will be provided by the director of Prisons or designee and will consist of:
- c. Polo shirt with approved HNT logo.
  - a. BDU pants.
  - b. Navy blue jacket with HNT and a drop-down flap indicating negotiator.
5. **Honor Guard:** It will be the responsibility of the team members to maintain the uniform in a clean and presentable condition at all times.
- a. All required equipment will be issued.
  - b. Class A Jacket Single Breasted.
  - c. Long Sleeve Shirt.
  - d. Dress Pants.
  - e. Campaign Hat.
  - f. Shoulder Cord.
  - g. High Gloss shoes.
  - h. Parade Gloves.
  - i. Dress duty belt with required items.
- H. All uniforms will be completed with the appropriate accessories as issued. No insignia of rank will be worn on the uniform. Team members are responsible for accountability of issued items. All uniform items will be returned within thirty (30) days of expiration from the team status.
- I. Activation: The director of Prisons or designee, incident leader, or designee may request activation of special teams for operations that require specialized skills or abilities, or during an emergency that they have determined is not controllable with available facility resources. The SORT team may be activated by the director of Prisons or designee.
- J. When HNT, CIRT, ERT, or SORT is activated the following provisions shall apply:
- 1. The director of Prisons or designee will direct the team leader to activate the team.
    - a. The activated members will be notified by telephone.
    - b. Activated members who are on duty must notify the director of Prisons and be properly relieved prior to leaving their post.
  - 2. The director of Prisons will ensure that all activated team members are relieved from regular duty.
  - 3. If the entire SORT team is to be activated, the director of Prisons or designee will notify the SORT leader, who will then notify required team members of the activation.
  - 4. Activated members will report to a pre-determined staging area for accountability and briefing.

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5. While on site at an emergency location, the special team is under operational control of the incident leader, or designee.
  6. Requests for honor guard will be forwarded through the team leader and approved by the director of Prisons.
- K. Special team weapons will be securely stored at the facility armories and shall only be issued upon direction of the special team leader or designee. Issued SORT semi-automatic weapons are approved to be kept with the SORT operator and must be secured when not in use.
- L. SORT/ERT may be utilized for special events in uniform or plain clothes capacity, as directed by the director of Prisons or designee.
- M. In the event additional vehicles are required for special team operations, they will be provided primarily by Fleet Management or by the facilities.

### **3. Request for Mutual Assistance:**

- A. *The role and functions of employees of other public or private agencies providing a service to the institution are covered by written policy and procedure that specify their relation to the authority and the responsibility of the warden/superintendent [ACA 5-ACI-1A-11].*
- B. All requests received by the DOC from other law enforcement agencies for mutual assistance that do not directly involve a DOC offender(s), will be immediately forwarded to the secretary of corrections (SOC).

### **4. Authorization of Mutual Assistance:**

- A. Only the SOC, or in his/her absence the deputy secretary, may authorize mutual assistance to another public law enforcement agency.
- B. No staff member of the DOC, who has been temporarily assigned duty within the jurisdiction of another public law enforcement agency for the purpose of providing mutual assistance, may be held civilly liable for providing assistance, except for acts of willful misconduct or gross negligence.

## **V. RESPONSIBILITY**

- A. The director of Prisons shall be responsible for the overall administration of all special teams and annual review and revision of this policy.
- B. Each team leader/leader shall be responsible for:
1. Storage and maintenance of equipment and assets assigned to the team and shall provide the DOC emergency manager a written inventory by July 1st of each fiscal year.
  2. Maintaining a current organizational chart.
  3. Leadership under mission conditions.
  4. Training.
  5. Team records management.
  6. Maintaining current activation rosters of all team members.
- C. The SORT leader and associate director of training shall review and approve all special team lesson plans.

## **VI. AUTHORITY**

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- A. SDCL § [34-48-2](#) Requests for assistance by public agencies and covered entities--Use of Incident Command System.
- B. SDCL § [34-48-9](#) Civil liability for assistance--Immunity.

## VII. HISTORY

November 2025  
November 2024  
October 2024  
October 2023 – new policy

## ATTACHMENTS

1. Special Teams Application
2. Special Teams Physical Agility Test (PAT)
3. Incident After Action Report
4. DOC Policy Implementation / Adjustments

### SPECIAL TEAMS APPLICATION

<b>Applicant Data</b>			
<b>Name</b>	Click or tap here to enter text.	<b>Hire Date:</b>	Click or tap here to enter text.
<b>Current DOC Position:</b>	Click or tap here to enter text.	<b>Special Team Applying to:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>SORT</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>ERT</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>CIRT</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>HNT</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Honor Guard</b>

<b>Specialized Training:</b>
Click or tap here to enter text.

<b>What skills do you have that would be valuable for this position?</b>
Click or tap here to enter text.

**I understand that this is a voluntary, non-compensated position that will require successful completion of a special teams' academy and annual training and certification.**

	Print/Signature	Date:
<b>Applicant</b>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap to enter a date.
<b>First Line Supervisor</b>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap to enter a date.
<b>Facility Warden</b>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap to enter a date.
<b>Director of Prisons</b>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap to enter a date.

### SPECIAL TEAMS PHYSICAL AGILITY TEST (PAT)

Name: (Last, First, M.I.) Click or tap here to enter text.	Facility Assignment: Click or tap here to enter text.
Home Phone Number: Click or tap here to enter text.	Work Phone Number: Click or tap here to enter text.
Currently Working In: <input type="checkbox"/> Security <input type="checkbox"/> Housing <input type="checkbox"/> Programs <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
Physical Assessment Is: <input type="checkbox"/> Initial Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Re-Assessment Of Team Member	

**Physical Abilities Assessment**

<b>SORT</b>	
50 Sit-Ups (Must be two minutes or under):	Choose an item.
35 Push-Ups (Must be two minutes or under):	Choose an item.
One And One-Half Mile (16 Minutes Or Less):	Choose an item.
Evaluator (Print Name And Title): Click or tap here to enter text.	
Evaluator's Signature: Click or tap here to enter text.	Date: Click or tap to enter a date.

<b>ERT Team</b>	
35 Sit-Ups (Must be two minutes or under):	Choose an item.
25 Push-Ups (Must be two minutes or under):	Choose an item.
150 lb. drag 25 yards:	Choose an item.
One Mile Run (14 Minutes Or Less):	Choose an item.
Evaluator (Print Name And Title): Click or tap here to enter text.	
Evaluator's Signature: _____	Date: Click or tap to enter a date.

<b>Honor Guard</b>	
3 mile run (32 minutes or less):	Choose an item.
Evaluator (print name and title): Click or tap here to enter text.	
Evaluator's signature: _____	Date: Click or tap to enter a date.

Distribution:                      Team Leader

## INCIDENT AFTER ACTION REPORT

**Incident:** Click or tap here to enter text.

**Date and Time of Incident:** Click or tap here to enter text.

**Name/s of person/s involved in the incident along with rank:**

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**Description of incident:**

Click or tap here to enter text.

**Witnesses: (include contact information)**

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**Follow Up Action:**

Click or tap here to enter text.

**Signature of person completing this form:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** Click or tap to enter a date.