Under Fire: Tactical Medical Support for SWAT Operations

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Olympus Risk Conference
October 3, 2018
Today’s Discussion at a Glance

With an in-depth look at tactical medicine in law enforcement operations, our goal is to provide public officials with a comprehensive risk management perspective of this unique exposure. A well-rounded understanding of key considerations is essential to effectively reduce liability.

- Introductions and session objectives
- Background: History of SWAT
- Growth & Evolution of SWAT
- Tactical Medical Support Options
- Hazards Associated with SWAT Operations
- Managing Risks Associated with Tactical Medicine
- Candidate Selection & Training
- Program Oversight & Medic Supervision
- Concluding Comments / Q&A
Background: History of SWAT

- 1964: Philadelphia Bank Robberies
- 1965: Watts Riots
- 1966: Texas Tower Shooting
- 1969: Black Panthers
- 1972: NYPD Hostage Negotiation Unit
- 1974: SLA Shootout
- 1980s: War on Drugs
- 1999: Columbine
- 2001: Post-9/11
Growth & Evolution of SWAT

- 1984: 26% of municipalities 25,000 – 50,000
- 2005: 80% of municipalities 25,000 – 50,000
- Multijurisdictional Partnerships
- Types of Operations
- 1980: 3000 SWAT Operations
- 2015: 80,000 SWAT Operations

x source: US Department of Justice
y source: Rutherford Institute
Tactical Medical Support

- Self Aid/Buddy Aid
- Tactical Medics
- EMS Support
- Doctors

Video: News Report on SWAT Doctors (Fox)
Hazards Facing SWAT Teams

- Assault (Sharp Edge and Gunfire)
- Fire and Explosions
- Narcotics & Other Hazardous Substances
- Hazardous Environments

Video: SWAT Team Fentanyl (WTNH)
Risks Associated with Tactical Medicine

- Medical Malpractice
- Workers Comp / Injured on Duty
- Law Enforcement Liability
- General Liability
- Reputational Risk
Candidate Selection & Training

- Determine Level of Care
- Armed or Unarmed
- Uniformed or No Uniform
- Officer Rank Considerations
- Qualifications and Vetting
- Training
- Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC)

Video: Ft Worth Tactical Medic Program (WFAA)
Program Oversight & Supervision

- Medical Director
- Whose Policies and Procedures to Follow?
- Who Directly Supervises the Medic/Doctor?
- What color badge does Doctor wear?
- Briefings and After Action Reports
- Accountability
- Documentation
- When things go bad
Concluding Comments / Q&A