



**Government of the United States Virgin Islands
Virgin Islands Police Department**



Policy and Procedure Manual

Series	Effective Date	Review Date	Policy Number
ROC	December 12, 2011	Annually	
Subject	SPECIAL OPERATIONS SRT- SNIPER OPERATIONS		
Chapter	3 - RULES OF CONDUCT		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Policy
References			<input type="checkbox"/> Replaces-

I. PURPOSE:

Purpose of this policy is to establish rules and regulations for the Virgin Islands Police Department (“VIPD”) Special Response Team (“SRT”) Sniper Unit for the deployment, training, qualifications and use of the Sniper. The VIPD policy is to ensure that Snipers adhere to the proper procedures in accordance with the use of force policy

II. POLICY:

The VIPD utilizes the Sniper teams to preserve life during a tactical response to high-risk situations that exceed those immediately available to the agencies first responders through special weapons and tactics, containment, de-escalation and control. The Utilization of the Special Response Team requires strict adherence to procedures that guide the Sniper in the use of force during a tactical response where force is necessary. The use of force by Snipers is only authorized when it is objectively reasonable and for a lawful purpose. The use of force by VIPD officers is governed by Federal and Virgin Islands law, including, but not limited to, the United States Constitution.

III. DEFINITIONS:

- A. Tactical Operator - A law enforcement officer who is trained and certified in the use of special weapons and tactics who is utilized in various capacities meeting the US Department of Home Land Security SWAT Team Classification System.
- B. Tactical Commander – A certified Tactical Operator holding the rank no less than a police sergeant who has the overall command authority in all matters pertaining to the internal organization of the team and at all the incident deployments. During the deployments the SRT Commander reports directly

to the Chief of Police or his designee. The Tactical Commander is the liaison between the tactical team and upper management and is responsible for equipment procurement/logistics, budgeting, team staffing, training guidance, rules, regulations and standard operating procedures.

- C. Team Leader – The first line supervisor who plans missions, training and standard achievements, team control and logistics, equipment recommendations and liaison between the team members and the tactical supervisor.
- D. SRT – An acronym for Special Response Team. A SRT Team usually refers to a group of members who have had special marksmanship training, defensive tactics training and who are equipped with shotguns, sniping rifles, automatic weapons, climbing gear, or other specialized equipment useful in dealing with snipers, barricaded persons, or hostage-takers.
- E. After action Report – A written report detailing the results of the tactical operation.

IV. PROCEDURES:

A. General

- a. The purpose of this policy is to establish for the role, responsibilities of and selection process for members of the Virgin Islands Police Department SRT Sniper Unit.
 - a. The Sniper/Spotter will use specialized training and sight enhancing equipment to observe and report real-time intelligence to SRT Team members and on-scene police personnel.
 - b. The Sniper/Spotter will provide protective over watch to SRT personnel, other officers, civilians and/or hostages during tactical situations by bringing precision fire against designated human targets, with the intent to immediately neutralize or suppress the dangerous and life threatening actions of those designated targets.

B. Rules of Engagement

- 1. The Sniper/Spotter will be authorized to use deadly force in the following circumstances:
 - a. To defend himself or a third person from what he reasonably believes is the imminent use of deadly force.

- b. To prevent the escape of a suspect from a tactical situation's containment perimeter, if the Sniper/Spotter reasonably believes such suspect's escape would seriously endanger human life or subject the public to the risk of great bodily harm.

C. Command Authority

- a. It is a fact that tactical situations are fluid and ever evolving and subject to rapid change. A command officer may be forced to order a Sniper/Spotter to use deadly force when the Sniper/Spotter does not have personal knowledge of the imminent use of deadly force by a suspect and that all other options to immediately neutralize or suppress the dangerous and life threatening actions of a suspect have been precluded. The **Collective Knowledge Doctrine** holds that, given the time and ability, the Sniper/Spotter would draw the same conclusions as the command officer regarding the need to employ deadly force against a suspect knowing the totality of the circumstances. The command officer has the collective intelligence and makes the decision to employ deadly force against a suspect. The command officer issuing such an order will
 - a. Issue the command in clear, plain language.
 - b. Will confirm with the Sniper/Spotter that the target has been positively identified and the Sniper/Spotter is in a position to engage the intended target.
 - c. Will include in his order a provision to abort the command to employ deadly force should the tactical situation warrant such a change.

D. Tactical Disarmament

Members of the VIPD Police Department SRT Sniper Unit will not engage in tactical disarmament or the intentional attempt to disarm suspects by shooting weapons from the hands of suspects.

E. Target Identification

When identifying predestinated targets, Sniper/Spotters will rely upon permanent facial features of a suspect when making any such identification.

F. Deployment of Sniper Unit Personnel

Whenever team staffing and the tactical situations allows, operational Sniper Unit personnel will be deployed in two man sniper/observer teams.

In such situations, the role of the sniper and observer will be interchangeable. When fatigue becomes a factor, the sniper and observer will alternate their respective roles.

G. Selection of Personnel

1. The selection and training of personnel is the single most important aspect in forming a Sniper Unit. The following are criteria that will be used as a basis in the selection process, but the Chief or the Tactical Commander may expand these standards.
2. Sniper Unit personnel must:
 - a. Be a current SRT Team member in good standing
 - b. Be volunteers
 - c. In good medical condition
 - d. Be emotionally mature and stable
 - e. Have demonstrated an above average proficiency with firearms and marksmanship.
 - f. Have three (3) years minimum of service within the Virgin Islands Police Department.
 - g. Do not have record of excessive sick or tardiness
 - h. No adverse disciplinary records
 - i. Must agree to serve at a minimum of three years after selection.
3. Selection Criteria
 - a. For those applicants who meet the above criteria, the Tactical Commander or his designee will:
 - i. review the applicant's personnel folder
 - ii. interview the applicant
 - iii. seek input from active Sniper Unit personnel
 - b. Selected candidate will join the Sniper Unit in a probationary status. Regular status will be achieved after the candidate has graduated from a formal police sniper school and has passed the department sniper qualification.

H. Qualification and Performance Standards for Snipers/Spotters

- a. Each sniper will attend and successfully complete a formal police sniper school which has been approved by the VIPD Training Academy and conforms to the FBI Sniper Qualifications. The training school will be no less than a one week course of instruction.

APPENDIX

The Qualification Course is a ten (10) round course and is pass/fail in two sections; the "Cold Bore" shot and the repetitive shots.

All shooting is done at 100 yards from the supported prone position. The course and time is as follows:

1. SHOT #1: The "Cold Bore" shot is the very first shot after removing the weapon system from its case. This shot simulates an actual operational shot in that no warm-up shot is afforded the candidate as in the event of deployment. If the "cold bore" shot is missed, the candidate fails the qualification run.

The candidate is required to attain hits on all of the next nine (9) shots to qualify.

2. SHOTS #2 and #3: The candidate begins by standing behind the weapon system with two (2) rounds placed beside the weapon system. On command, the candidate has two (2) minutes to load the weapon system, take position, and fire two (2) shots into the scoring zone of ½ life-size face targets (simulates 200 yard shot).
3. SHOTS #4, #5 and #6: The "Stress Shot" candidate begins behind the weapon system with three (3) rounds placed beside the weapon system. The candidate then goes for a four (4) minute jog to elevate the heart rate. Upon returning to the rifle the candidate jogs in place behind the weapon until given the command to fire. Upon command to fire the candidate has one minute and ten seconds (01:10) to load the weapon, take position and fire three (3) shots into the scoring zone of a life-size face target.
4. SHOTS #7 through #10: The candidate begins by standing behind the weapon system with four (4) rounds placed beside the weapon system. On command, the candidate has two (2) minutes to load the weapon system, take position, and fire four (4) shots into the scoring zone of a circle target.
5. SCORING: Possible 100%, minimal 90%. Shots which touch the scoring lines will be counted as hits.

- b. Each sniper will pass the team qualification course. The qualification course will be administered a minimum of four times per year. Each qualification course will require a score of 100% to pass and consists of a ten (10) round course and is pass/fail in two sections. The “Cold Bore” shot and the repetitive shots. See Appendix.
- c. Failure to pass two consecutive qualification courses will result in removal from operational status until the officer is able to demonstrate proficiency with passing scores on two consecutive qualification courses.
- d. To meet the needs of the Sniper/Spotter position, the Sniper/Spotter will receive ongoing training in the following skills and disciplines:
 - a. Field craft Skills. These skills shall include, but be limited to, stalking, movement, camouflage, range estimation well as hide selection, construction and management.
 - b. Tactics. Tactics shall include, but not be limited to, target selection and identification, communications, site diagramming and operation planning.
 - c. Marksmanship.

I. Equipment

1. Weapons

- a. The weapon system issued to the VIPD SRT Snipers will be the Remington model 700 bolt action rifle chambered in .308. Each rifle will be equipped with a scope. Currently all rifles are equipped with the Leupold Mark IV scope. Only weapons and rifle scopes issued by the VIPD Police Department will be used by Sniper Unit personnel in the performance of their duties.
- b. Sniper Unit personnel will be responsible for field cleaning their rifles after use and maintaining their rifles and scopes in a serviceable condition.
- c. Service, repair or modification of Sniper Unit weapon systems.
 - i. Only a certified Remington armorer or qualified gunsmith will be authorized to perform any service, repairs or make any modification to Sniper Unit weapon systems that goes beyond basic field cleaning.
 - ii. Any request for service, repair or modification to any Sniper Unit

weapons system will be made in writing to the Sniper Unit Leader or, in his absence, the Tactical Commander. No service, repair or modification will take place to a weapon system without the approval of the Sniper Unit Leader or, in his absence, the Tactical Commander. All service or repair records will be provided to the Sniper Unit Leader and retained on file.

2. Data Book

All active Snipers assigned to the VIPD Sniper Unit will maintain a data book in which is recorded data on previous engagements, commonly referred to as d.o.p.e. that is pertinent to the performance of the individual's weapon system at varying distances, under different climatic conditions, with different ammunition lots etc.


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