



SACRAMENTO POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDERS



580.18 DEPLOYMENT OF ARMORED VEHICLES 02-02-2024

PURPOSE

The purpose of this order is to establish guidelines for the deployment and use of Sacramento Police Department (SPD) armored vehicles during critical incidents.

POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Sacramento Police Department to deploy and use armored vehicles solely for official law enforcement purposes and in accordance with federal and California state laws regarding the use of motor vehicles. Armored vehicles may be used in response to critical incidents to enhance officer and community safety, improve scene containment and stabilization, and lead ultimately to the successful conclusion of a critical incident.

PROCEDURE

A. DEFINITIONS

1. **ARMORED VEHICLE** – Commercially produced vehicles equipped with armor plating and bullet resistant glass utilized for law enforcement purposes.
2. **ARMORED PERSONNEL VEHICLES (BEARCAT)** – Wheeled, armored vehicles designed primarily to transport personnel and equipment. The armored personnel vehicles can be used by trained patrol and tactical team officers for the movement and protection of officers and civilians and provide greater protection beyond that of ballistic shields and personal body armor.
3. **ARMORED CATERPILLAR MULTI-TERRAIN LOADER (ROOK)** – A tracked armored vehicle built on the chassis of a Caterpillar bulldozer designed primarily to be used by trained tactical officers to operate in high-threat environments. The Rook is equipped with mission-specific attachments that can be used in response to threats or hazards including explosives and ballistic threats.

B. GENERAL

1. Patrol officers are the first responders to all unplanned critical incidents and should have access to Bearcat armored vehicles to provide ballistic protection during these incidents.
2. Drivers shall have completed a formalized course of instruction in the operation of Bearcat armored vehicles.
3. The Rook armored vehicle shall only be operated by Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team members who have completed the appropriate training.
4. The Metro Division SWAT commander will be responsible for the security and maintenance of all armored vehicles.

C. DEPLOYMENT

1. **General:**
 - a. Armored vehicles shall only be driven by officers trained in their deployment and in a manner consistent with department policy and training.
 - b. The use of armored vehicles shall only be authorized by a watch commander based on specific circumstances, such as critical incidents involving actual, threatened, or suspected violence related to loss of life or serious bodily injury.
2. **Bearcat:**
 - a. The watch commander shall ensure that the SWAT commander is notified regarding the deployment of Bearcat armored vehicles by patrol officers as soon as is practical.
 - b. Bearcat armored vehicles shall not be used in lieu of using SWAT, as detailed in General



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Order 580.15 (Special Weapons and Tactics Team).

- c. Dispatch shall note on the call whenever patrol officers are deploying Bearcat armored vehicles.
- d. Bearcat armored vehicles may be used for community events and events displaying SPD personnel and equipment with authorization from the SWAT commander.

3. Rook:

- a. Deployment of the Rook armored vehicle shall only be authorized by the SWAT commander, or their designee. The Rook shall not be authorized as a matter of routine, but rather after a careful evaluation of the specific facts and circumstances of the incident, and that its use is likely to be required.
- b. The Rook armored vehicle shall only be used for:
 - (1) Ballistic protection for officers and members of the public, including first, second, or third story coverage.
 - (2) Rough terrain environments where the use of other equipment would be limited.
 - (3) Providing rescue platforms for elevated structure rescues or evacuations.
 - (4) Removal of unoccupied vehicles blocking officer access.
 - (5) Removal of fortifications blocking officer access.
 - (6) Porthole breaching for Uncrewed Aerial Systems (UAS) access or gas deployment when it is unsafe or impractical to use other equipment.
 - (7) Door breaching when it is unsafe or impractical to use other equipment.
 - (8) Other unspecified emergency situations where preservation of life is paramount, and the use of other equipment is unsafe, impossible, or infeasible.

D. LIMITATIONS ON THE DEPLOYMENT OF ARMORED VEHICLES

1. General:

- a. Armored vehicles shall only be deployed for critical incidents involving actual, threatened, or suspected violence related to loss of life or serious bodily injury.
- b. Armored vehicles shall not be used for routine patrol or day-to-day operations.
- c. The use of armored vehicles will comply with the authorizations and prohibitions on the use of armored vehicles solely for official law enforcement purposes as set forth in the Department's policies, and pursuant to state and federal law.

2. Bearcat:

- a. Bearcat armored vehicles shall not be used for crowd control situations unless articulable facts dictate the need to deploy the equipment.

3. Rook:

- a. The Rook shall not be used for any crowd control purposes.
- b. The Rook shall not be used to move any items related to homeless encampment cleanup.
- c. The Rook shall not be used for any community events without approval by the Chief of Police (COP).

E. ARMORED VEHICLE DEPLOYMENT NOTIFICATION

- 1. All Deployments of any SPD or outside agency armored vehicles, including armored personnel vehicles and armored caterpillar multi-terrain loaders will require the following notification process:
 - a. For Preplanned High-Risk Search or Arrest Warrants:
 - (1) The SWAT commander or designee will notify the area captain prior to deployment of any armored vehicle.
 - (2) The SWAT commander or designee will notify the area captain when any armored vehicle is on scene and deployed.
 - (3) Unless the situation becomes a critical incident, when the incident is resolved the SWAT commander or designee will coordinate a SAC-ALERT community notification as detailed in



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General Order 510.03 (Public Alerts and Warnings), to notify the community members in the immediate area of the reason that armored vehicles were deployed and that the incident is resolved, and that the armored vehicles are no longer deployed in the area.

- (4) The immediate area requiring notification will be defined as a one block by one block radius around the incident.
- (5) Following the incident and within a reasonable time frame following the incident resolution, the SWAT commander will provide a brief email summary of the incident and the reason for the deployment of armored vehicle(s) to the COP, deputy chiefs, and area commander.

b. For Critical Incidents:

- (1) The on-duty watch commander responsible for the critical incident requiring the deployment of any SPD or outside agency armored vehicle shall notify the area captain of the deployment as soon as practical.
- (2) The watch commander shall also ensure that an SPD management page is sent via the department paging system notifying SPD management and selected department and city staff of the deployment of any SPD or outside agency armored vehicle. A management page for a SWAT callout should include the notification of the deployment of armored vehicle(s) and does not require a separate management page.
- (3) The watch commander shall coordinate a SAC-ALERT community emergency notification, as detailed in General Order 510.03, to notify the community members in the immediate area of the that reason armored vehicles are being deployed.
 - (a) The notification shall be made once the armored vehicle(s) and the SWAT team or involved officers are in place and have established a secure inner perimeter.
 - (b) The immediate area requiring notification will be defined as a one block by one block radius around the incident.
- (4) A second notification shall be made once the critical incident is resolved, advising community members in the immediate area that the incident has been resolved and that the armored vehicles are no longer deployed in the area.
- (5) Following the incident and within a reasonable time frame following the incident resolution, the watch commander will provide a brief email summary of the incident and the reason for the deployment of armored vehicle(s) to the COP, deputy chiefs, and area commander.
- (6) If the watch commander believes that following the notification process would be detrimental to officer or community safety, they may communicate those concerns to the area captain who will confer with the deputy chief of operations for a decision on notifications.

F. ARMORED VEHICLE DEPLOYMENT TRACKING

1. All deployments of SPD armored vehicles will be tracked utilizing the military equipment tracker that is managed by the Professional Standards Unit.