

Standards for TEMS

NTOA Tactical Response and Operations Standard for Law Enforcement Agencies Updated to Include TEMS

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The National Tactical Officers Association recently released an updated edition of the Tactical Response and Operations Standard for Law Enforcement Agencies. First published in 2008 and updated in 2011 and 2015, the 2018 version contains a section on Tactical Emergency Medical Services (TEMS), establishing standards that reflect the increasing importance of integrating medical elements into law enforcement special operations. This document establishes voluntary standards for association member agencies and provides core concepts and principles that serve as a benchmark for performance and operations by special operations teams within the law enforcement community. The scope of the standard includes concepts and principles relating to organization, training, operational tactics, personnel management and equipment associated with tactical teams.

The NTOA was a pioneer in recognizing how the incorporation

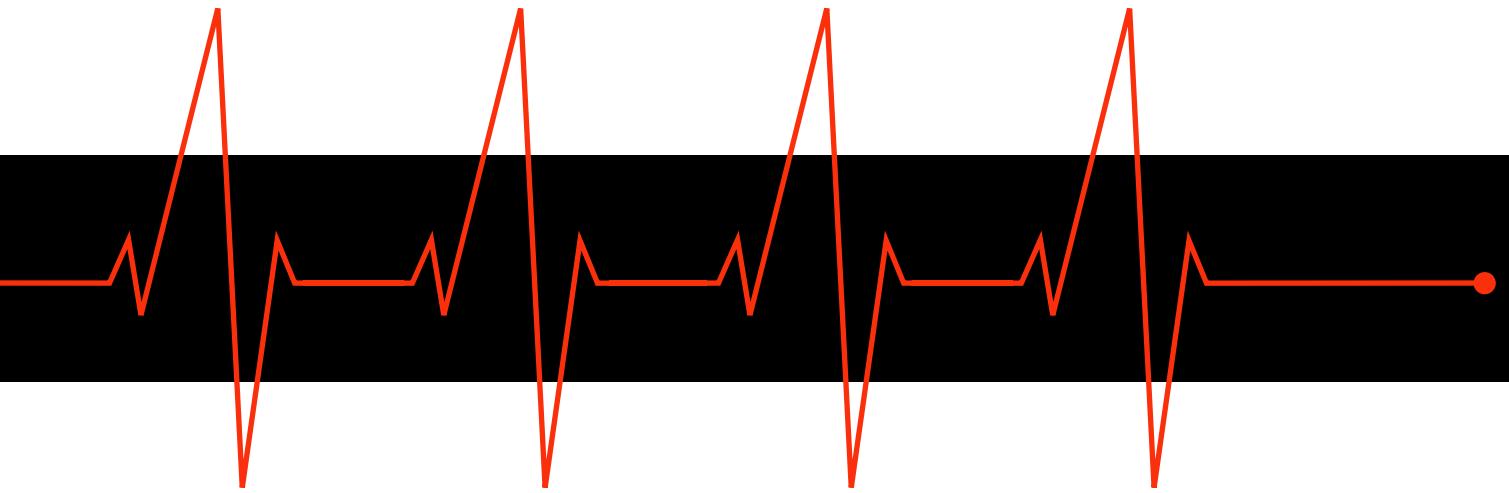
of medical elements contributes to the success of mission-driven police operations, and remains a leader in TEMS advocacy and training. The TEMS section in the updated standard expands on the NTOA Position Statement on TEMS. First published in 1994 and revised in 2007 and 2013, the TEMS position statement reflects changes in law enforcement operations and advances in medicine. While prior versions of the NTOA standard included TEMS recommendations, this is the first time TEMS guidelines have their own section, highlighting the importance of establishing a medical element in special operations and facilitating implementation of the recommendations.

Incorporating TEMS into the current standard reflects the duty of commanders to mitigate foreseeable consequences of the law enforcement mission. High-risk, large-scale and extended police operations that put hostages, suspects, police officers and suspects in harm's way impose a

burden on commanders to anticipate and plan for the potential tactical and medical repercussions. This includes the incorporation of medical elements into those operations.

TEMS standards are addressed in Section 3.3. In this section, the NTOA acknowledges that the risks associated with special law enforcement teams call for incorporating a medical element into all phases of these operations. In addition to the ability to render immediate medical care, medical providers assigned to these law enforcement teams should be expected to assist commanders with developing pre-deployment medical risk assessments, implementing risk-reduction strategies, provide logistic support, and serve as a liaison to coordinate medical operations with local emergency medical services (EMS). Key aspects of the TEMS standards include:

- Medical personnel assigned to TEMS elements should train and be equipped to deploy routinely with



specialized tactical teams in a manner appropriate to the threat and mission objectives, and in accordance with respective team protocols. Medical providers should operate under protocols that permit the rapid access to casualties, the opportunity to provide medical countermeasures, and in a manner that directly supports tactical operations.

- The selection, training and operational role of TEMS personnel should occur under written policies and procedures that include guidelines establishing clearly defined chains of operational and medical command, and scope of practice. These personnel should undergo TEMS-specific didactic and skills training that provide for a working competency of medical best practices and tactics. TEMS programs should validate ongoing provider competency through periodic retraining and skills reviews.

- Medical providers assigned to TEMS elements are expected to

remain highly proficient in their technical and clinical decision-making skills. Maintaining high levels of clinical proficiency will require that EMTs and paramedics supporting law enforcement operations continue to have ongoing experience as field EMS providers.

The inclusion of a TEMS section into the Tactical Response and Operations Standard for Law Enforcement Agencies reflects the NTOA's position that TEMS is now a standard of care for law enforcement special operations. This is intended to promote the development of interoperability standard practices.

The NTOA standards are consistent with and further support the ongoing efforts of other organizations promoting the incorporation of medical support into law enforcement operations, such as the Committee for Tactical Emergency Casualty Care

(C-TECC), the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), the National Association of EMTs (NAEMT), the International Public Safety Association (IPSA), and others, to foster the development of a standard taxonomy and evidence-based clinical practice guidelines tailored to the law enforcement mission.

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