



## News

### Medics provide faster care in SWAT crises

By BRANDON JOHANSSON

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**AURORA** | Crouched behind two shield-toting Aurora police SWAT team members, the Aurora firefighters decked out in helmets and bulletproof vests and with pistols strapped to their hips looked like any other member of the SWAT team.

It wasn't until they grabbed the victim during a mock operation Wednesday at the Aurora police firing range that the firefighters stood out from the others.

The firefighters, Grant Carlson and Lt. Greg Terry, lifted the victim by his feet and hands, and carried him to a safe place. The firefighters quickly cut off his shirt, applied bandages and a tourniquet then signaled for an ambulance.

Terry and Carlson are two of six new Tactical Emergency Medical Service providers, TEMS, embedded with the Aurora police SWAT Team.

Aurora fire and police departments started the program late last year with the hope that having paramedics embedded with the SWAT Team would mean faster response times in a crisis.

Kevin Waters, EMS bureau manager for Aurora fire, said of the six medics working with the SWAT Team, four are firefighters trained in SWAT operations and two are police officers trained as paramedics.

Waters said other jurisdictions have similar programs with SWAT team members able to provide some emergency medical care, but Aurora's is slightly different.

"This program distinguishes itself by providing paramedic-level care," Waters said.

The medics have not yet been used in a SWAT situation, but have been in training since late last year.

Lt. Terry, one of the medics on hand Wednesday, said the medics are important because they mean victims in a SWAT situation can be treated far quicker than they were before.

Before the medics, emergency medical crews waited a safe distance from a scene until the situation was safe enough to transport a victim.

Now, Terry said, with paramedics embedded with the team, victims can be treated on scene by a paramedic before being transported in an ambulance.

"Now, we are right there and we can provide immediate care to that patient," Terry said.

Aurora police Officer Faith Goodrich, one of the police officers in the program, said that training with the firefighters has also led to better communication between the two departments and more understanding between firefighters and police officers.

"I think it has increased the goodwill between the two departments," she said.

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**SWIFT SWAT CARE** Aurora fire Lt. Greg Terry (right), and Grant Carlson tend to John Spera, playing a victim, during a training exercise June 16 at The Police Training Center in Aurora. (Heather A. Longway/The Aurora Sentinel)