



The Web Site of The Sacramento Bee

This story is taken from [Sacbee](#) / [News](#).

City paramedics to join local SWAT teams

By Niesha Lofing - nlofing@sacbee.com

Published 12:19 pm PDT Wednesday, October 31, 2007

Paramedics for the Sacramento Fire Department are preparing to enter a new frontier of emergency response - working alongside local SWAT teams during high-risk incidents.

It's a partnership that the Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District and the Sacramento Sheriff's Department have had in place for 11 years.

"If we look forward five years from now, it's going to be a national requirement for SWAT teams to have a medical component," said Sacramento Fire Capt. Chad Augustin.

Nine Sacramento Fire paramedics comprise the new Tactical Emergency Medical Services program, which will respond alongside Special Weapons and Tactics officers when major operations arise.

The team has been training with the SWAT team this week and is set to officially launch their efforts in January, said Sacramento Fire Capt. Chad Augustin.

The suburban Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District is planning to officially launch its 14-member Tactical Emergency Medical Support Team in about a month, said Capt. Jeff Lynch.

For the city departments, the major difference lies in proximity to the SWAT team and the type of medical aid paramedics will be able to provide.

In the past, paramedics were stationed as much as a mile away during SWAT incidents.

Now, the team will be stationed alongside the SWAT team - albeit in a safe

location - and available to aid in medical situations within seconds, instead of minutes, Augustin said.

"Sometimes those three or four minutes can make the difference between life and death," he said.

The team is trained to care for the medical well-being of the SWAT team, as well as to provide aid during tactical emergencies, such as providing medical aid for people exposed to chemical agents and veterinary medicine to aid an injured police dog.

"Extra training in a different environment is really what it comes down to," Augustin said.

The fire district's team receives training once a month and also has attended a tactical medical training conference that the fire district sponsored. Four of the team members also are trained as reserve sheriff's deputies, Lynch said.

Plans for the partnership began about eight years ago, but were met with various roadblocks. Over the past year, officials have been dedicated to ensuring the partnership became a reality, he said.

Initial startup costs for the partnership were about \$10,000 and were shared by the two departments. Ongoing costs are estimated between \$30,000 and \$50,000, primarily for training, and officials are working to secure federal grant funding, Augustin said.

Sacramento Police Sgt. Matt Young said the team is a tremendous resource for law enforcement and the community.

"We're very excited about it," Young said. "You hope that you never have these types of injuries, but history dictates that we will have incidents that will make this team invaluable."

Go to: [Sacbee](#) / [Back to story](#)

This article is protected by copyright and should not be printed or distributed for anything except personal use.
The Sacramento Bee, 2100 Q St., P.O. Box 15779, Sacramento, CA 95852
Phone: (916) 321-1000

Copyright © [The Sacramento Bee](#)