

For SWAT What Training Is Most Important

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We are constantly asked by teams & Individuals that we train, what training is most important? Is it tactical movement, breaching, building clearing, or shooting? As instructors it is our responsibility to be truthful and forth coming. Each one of the subjects above in and of themselves are certainly important, but when rated together from one to four with one being the most important I would have to rate them all a one. Some will say that I am evading the question but the truth of the matter is very simple through the following deduction process.

Tactical Movement:

Tactical movement is critically important to get your team to the breach point with out being compromised and losing the surprise gained at the breach. If you cannot move from the LCC to the breach point without being fired on with possible resulting casualties or being pinned down in the back yard, how well you breach, clear buildings and shoot becomes a moot point. Your team has failed, possibly received casualties, lost hostage lives, and may be in a worse situation than prior to leaving the LCC. In this light I rate **Tactical Movement** number one in importance.

Breaching:

A surprise, instantaneous breach is certainly mandatory for hostage rescue and is required for initial entry and dominance of the structure. Failure to breach successfully or having to redeploy to the alternate breach point may cause the team to be shot at and hit through the door or wall, or tracked through windows and engaged while moving to the alternate breach point. This could result in team casualties, failed mission, or lost hostage lives. Without the ability to breach in various tactical or architectural situations using explosives, ballistics, thermal, hydraulic, or manual breaching techniques makes for an unsuccessful team in certain critical situations. If you cannot breach, how well you move tactically, clear buildings or shoot becomes another moot point. In this light I rate **Breaching** number one in importance.

Building Clearing:

Teams must be trained to perfection in building clearing techniques. From planning & rehearsal prior to entry to being able to dominate the part of the structure you are currently in, is critical. Teams and team members must know when to go dynamic, slow and deliberate, or hold and evaluate. Team members must know when and where to use distraction devices, specialty support munitions and why. Teams must be able to support their building clearing move with tactics and fore thought. They must maintain a rear guard where needed and properly anchor critical points in large structures. They must know how to conduct as safe an operation in an extremely unsafe environment, or risk team casualties, mission failure, and lost hostage lives. If you cannot clear buildings properly how well you tactically move, breach, and shoot is another moot point. In this light I rate **Building Clearing** number one in importance.

Shooting:

During tactical operations it is a given that sooner or later an entry man is going to have to acquire a target and successfully engage it to save his, team members, or third party lives. It is also a given that in most cases at room distances the person who shoots first will generally hit his/her target first. Range training, Shoot houses, and special marksmanship/ shooting skills training is mandatory for all SWAT team members, Team members must strive to attain 100% perfection in their shooting. Many gunfights are won with the first round fired. If team members cannot shoot quickly and accurately on call and under stress they risk mission failure, team casualties, and hostage lives. If you cannot shoot to instantly resolve the situation, how you tactically move, breach, and clear buildings makes those skills my final moot point. In this light I rate **Shooting** number one in importance.

In reality Tactical movement, breaching, building clearing & shooting are all building blocks of equal importance that insure a well trained, tactically proficient, successful team. All four subjects have always been of equal importance towards successful mission accomplishment and team capability that ensures the team is fully able to handle any given threat it is asked to handle. I am not saying a well trained team will not find itself in a tough situation with casualties. I am saying if the four primary building blocks have been trained on to perfection, the percentage of failure at team level is greatly reduced, and the chance of success greatly improved.

There is no time on a SWAT training day for the wasting of time, or sitting around talking. The average team is expected to handle the most critical of incidents that are rife with first time situation circumstances, out of ordinary architecture, and armed violent subjects. The four building blocks must be trained on rigorously, redundantly, and with total team and individual focus.

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