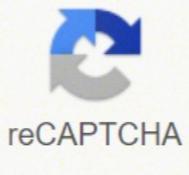




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How to become swat agent

SWAT officers are a part of highly trained teams within police departments that handle difficult criminal situations, such as counter-terrorism efforts, hostage situations, and the pursuit of highly dangerous criminals. These teams are exclusive parts of police departments, and to become a member there are specific requirements. Education and Other Requirements A minimum of a high school diploma or equivalent and pass a thorough criminal background check are required to become both a police officer and a SWAT officer. Also, candidates must usually be U.S. citizens and at least 21 years old. Generally, law enforcement agencies require individuals to pass physical examinations that assess hearing and vision, physical strength, and agility. Many law enforcement organizations prefer candidates with a college degree in criminal justice or a related area. Many departments require law enforcement personnel to pass physical and mental examinations prior to beginning their career. Experience Nearly all SWAT officers start their careers as police officers or patrol officers. In these positions, they receive the essential training at a police academy or related instruction. They must show their ability to perform law enforcement tasks, and gain significant experience in the field. In general, police officers must have a minimum of three years of experience before applying to become a SWAT officer. In many departments, excellent police officers are placed on promotion lists that determine their level of advancement. To move up on the list, officers must demonstrate above-average job performance and achieve high scores on examinations. Aspiring individuals can attend voluntary training programs in marksmanship, defense tactics, and other areas to gain a competitive edge for the position. SWAT Officers Necessary Skills Aspiring SWAT officers must have great critical thinking and interpersonal communication abilities. They must also demonstrate excellent physical fitness and marksmanship. SWAT officers must demonstrate empathy, and have the emotional stability to deal with unpleasant and dangerous situations. They must be quick on their feet, and have the ability to make good decisions in stressful situations. Many departments require candidates to have a recommendation from a high-rank officer. Advancing to the SWAT Team Police officers who demonstrate excellent skills, have a good record and show they can handle the demands of the position are encouraged to volunteer to join SWAT teams. Higher-ranking law enforcement professionals commonly choose the selected individuals. Potential candidates are often required to pass an examination that assesses if they possess the necessary knowledge and abilities to work on the SWAT team. After being accepted, SWAT officers undergo about 15 to 30 weeks of specialized training. The topics include crisis situations, self-defense, weaponry, hostage negotiation, and crowd control. Depending on the needs of the specific SWAT team, some new officers complete training in explosives, armored vehicles, and sniper tactics. Additionally, SWAT team officers must complete regular training to keep their skills up to date and maintain physical stamina. Licensing and Certification Some states and law enforcement agencies require SWAT officers to pass certification examinations and annual fitness training. Others require officers to re-qualify to use specialized weapons on a regular basis. Related: GOVERNMENT JOBS JOBS IN LAW ENFORCEMENT OR AS A FEDERAL AGENT LEGAL AND COURT JOBS JOBS IN SOCIAL SERVICES HOW LONG WILL I HAVE TO GO TO SCHOOL FOR A CRIMINAL JUSTICE DEGREE? There's a lot of mystery and mystique surrounding SWAT teams around the world. These highly trained, elite law enforcement specialty units have at their disposal a host of tools and tactics to make them ready for the most dangerous and volatile of situations that may require police action. You might even call them the Navy SEALs of policing, which is why any police officer who is honest with themselves will likely admit that they've had dreams of making the team at some point in their career. So just how do you become a SWAT team member? First things first, before you can make it to SWAT, you need to make it as a police officer. Most SWAT team members, except for a few medics or other non-law enforcement roles, are cops first. To be considered for a job as a police officer, you must, at a minimum: Be a U.S. citizen Be at least 19 years old (minimum age will vary from state to state) Hold a valid driver's license Have a high school diploma or GED certificate (some agencies may require an associate or bachelor's degree) Have either prior military service, other law enforcement history, or public contact work experience If you meet the minimums, you'll undergo an extensive background investigation process, and you'll need to complete police academy training. Once you've gotten hired as a police officer, you'll typically need to serve for at least two years, perhaps longer, before you are eligible for any specialty units, including SWAT team positions. Once you've got the requisite experience, you'll be eligible to try out when a position becomes vacant. Be forewarned: SWAT team try-outs are intense and will require everything you've got, both physically and mentally. Perhaps the biggest challenges for aspiring SWAT team members are the physical requirements. SWAT officers have to be in the absolute top physical condition to perform the many functions they may be called to handle. For that reason, SWAT team physical assessments measure the strength and endurance of potential new members. Specific physical requirements will likely vary among departments, but a good gauge to see if you're close to where you need to be are the FBI's Tactical Hostage Rescue Team's physical requirements. Candidates for the FBI's HRT must, at a minimum, be able to: Perform 12 pull-ups Complete 60 sit-ups in two minutes Perform 50 push-ups Run 2 miles in under 14:59 Climb eight flights of stairs, wearing a 50-pound vest and carrying a 35-pound ram, in 60 seconds Swim 200 meters in seven minutes Keep in mind that these are only the minimum physical requirements to be considered for the team, and this is just one agency. Different agencies may have slightly different requirements, but the fact remains that you will need to get in shape and stay in shape to make it in SWAT. Most of the emphasis for SWAT team tryouts and selection is placed upon physical fitness, but there are other considerations as well. SWAT members must be expert marksmen, able to think quickly on their feet, take and give orders, communicate effectively with others, have a strong sense of teamwork, and be mentally tough. In many cases, an officer's prior work history and performance with the department will be taken into consideration when choosing SWAT members. SWAT team members are considered to be elite within the ranks of law enforcement agencies. These units are highly cohesive teams in which every member plays a vital role in advancing the mission of the group. It takes a tremendous amount of dedication, determination, and hard work. If you have a strong sense of team and self-sacrifice and you think you can muster the mental and physical strength needed to make it on the SWAT team, then you may just find it to be the perfect criminology career for you. Something went wrong. Wait a moment and try again. By Police1 Staff So you want to join a SWAT team? These specialized units respond to incidents like hostage standoffs, barricaded gunmen and riots. In 2005, at least 80% of towns with a population between 25,000 and 50,000 people had their own SWAT team, and they conduct over 50,000 raids every year, according to the National Review. These teams vary in size from agency to agency, and it's a highly sought-after position - you'll face a lot of intense competition to score a spot in a unit. Given the nature of the work, you'll be expected to be in tip-top physical and mental condition. Before you even apply, know that this is physically and mentally demanding, high-risk work. Denver Police Department SWAT team members survey Denver Broncos fans as they celebrate the team's victory over the Carolina Panthers in Super Bowl 50. (AP Photo/David Zalubowski) Of course, it is also very fulfilling. Special operations are an opportunity to challenge yourself in new and exciting ways beyond the usual street patrol. While requirements vary depending on the jurisdiction, here is a basic overview of what to expect if you decide to take the path of a Special Weapons and Tactics operator. swat requirements Given the nature of the work, most if not all police agencies require at least two to three years of experience as a police officer before you're eligible to apply for SWAT. In addition to the minimum education requirements to become a police officer (high school diploma or GED), a college education will give you a leg up on the competition, and many agencies prefer you have some form of higher learning under your belt. An associate's or bachelor's degree in a relevant field such as criminal justice is highly recommended. From there, you'll undergo rigorous physical fitness tests. To put it bluntly, this job will kick your ass. Making SWAT isn't just about strength - they're looking for endurance as well, so make sure you're in great shape. Of course, it's not just about the physical. SWAT officers need to be able to think quickly on their feet in high-stress situations, work well in teams, and be highly proficient with firearms (you'll get additional training for special weapons as part of the process, but you need to hone your marksmanship skills now, not later). You also need to have an outstanding service record - remember, these are highly desired openings, and you're going to see a lot of competition. In addition to physical and firearms tests, you'll also be interviewed and likely have a psych evaluation. From there, you will go through additional, specialized training for this elite position. Once you've made SWAT, expect ongoing training annually. You'll need to stay in peak physical shape and remain proficient with the weapons you use. WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SWAT TEAM? SWAT officers are on-call all day, every day. They respond to crisis situations that require a level of specialized tactical expertise beyond the scope or capability of the patrol officer, like responding to active shooters. There are many different roles in a SWAT team, including sniper, medic, crisis negotiator, breacher, and munitions expert. Each role requires its own set of specialized training. HOW MUCH IS A SWAT OFFICER PAID? It's important to keep in mind that most agencies have part-time SWAT officers that also perform regular law enforcement duties. In a recent IACP/NTOA study of SWAT trends, for example, only 1.7% of responding departments had SWAT teams comprised of full-time officers with no collateral duties. That said, like police officers, the average SWAT pay is \$67,290, with the opportunity for raises the longer you serve in the unit. Top earners in states like California can pull in well over \$100K per year. Overtime opportunities and additional payments vary by agency. For example, in Albuquerque, SWAT officers receive an extra \$50 a month for being a member of the team. YOU'RE EITHER SWAT, OR YOU'RE NOT So what are you waiting for? Get out there and join one of the most elite units in law enforcement. And for more information on all things SWAT from our expert columnists, check out our full coverage. This article, originally published February 2018, has been updated.

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