

Chapter: Employee Benefits
Title: Special Tactics and Response (STAR) Team

Effective Date: 12/1/11
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New

ACA Standard(s): N/A

(a) **Policy.**

The Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) has a Special Tactics and Response Team (STAR) at each TJJD operated facility. The STAR team is designed to respond to crisis situations within the institution. Special criteria apply to the selection of team members and based on the size of each facility each institution will be authorized to have between 10 and 25 STAR team members.

TJJD will provide each STAR team member appropriate uniforms and equipment. The equipment will be kept at the facility in a secured location. TJJD will also be responsible for providing initial and ongoing training to all STAR team members.

The STAR team requires its members to participate in mandatory training that is often rigorous and grueling. This strenuous training can cause both physical and emotional fatigue. In actual emergencies such as riots or major disturbances, the STAR team members may encounter hostile and combative youth that may need to be physically controlled. STAR team members will be required to wear special protective clothing such as helmets, bullet resistant vests, and gas masks. The team members will also be skilled in the use of special devices and chemical agents.

(b) **Applicability.**

Other applicable policies include GAP.97.23 (relating to Use of Force) and GAP.97.27 (relating to Riot Control).

(c) **Eligibility.**

- (1) Any TJJD staff member (excluding educational staff) who has routine/daily direct care with youth and must have completed at least six (6) consecutive months and must have a satisfactory performance appraisal on file to be eligible to apply to be a STAR team member.
- (2) To qualify as a STAR team member each applicant must be trained and successfully complete each of the following:
 - (A) First Aid/CPR;
 - (B) Handle with Care; and
 - (C) Chemical Agents and Riot Control.
- (3) Each applicant must possess a Class C driver's license and meet all driving requirements as defined in PRS.43.13.
- (4) At no time may any STAR team member or applicant have current criminal charges pending against them.

(d) **Selection Criteria.**

- (1) STAR team positions will be posted on the facilities local bulletin board. Selection procedures will be determined by using the agency selection process. In case of equal eligibility for the STAR team, interview scores, tenure, experience, and/or job performance may be used as the basis for a final selection decision. The STAR team leader is responsible for the selection and hiring process.
- (2) STAR team members will be required, at any time, to verify their physical ability to perform tasks as identified on the STAR Physical Capacity Report form, HR-036s. STAR team members who cannot meet the physical capacity requirements will be removed from the STAR team. Each STAR team candidate must be physically able to perform the following duties:

- (A) walk at a fast pace for 2 miles at least three (3) times per week;
 - (B) carry or wear approximately 30 pounds of riot gear;
 - (C) move 150 pounds 20 yards, unassisted;
 - (D) be exposed to chemical agents, pepper sprays, and tear gas;
 - (E) maintain a high tolerance for stress;
 - (F) work in all types of weather conditions;
 - (G) work in cramped areas;
 - (H) stand for long periods of time (up to 4 hours);
 - (I) restrain aggressive/combative youth of up to 200 lb. or more;
 - (J) drive motor vehicles; and
 - (K) wear protective gas masks or other protection devices.
- (3) All STAR team members will be assigned a pager and will ensure the pager is activated and functioning properly at all times. STAR team members may be required to respond even if they are not actually assigned to be on-call at a particular time.
- (4) If on-call, STAR team members must be able to arrive at their designated facility within 30 minutes of being paged.
- (A) The on-call STAR team member must be prepared, ready, and able to respond to any emergency response or mock drill.
 - (B) The on-call STAR team member must not be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, or any mood altering substances during the time they are on-call.
 - (C) If the on-call STAR team member is placed on medication under a physician's prescription, or is sick and unable to respond to an emergency situation, it is the responsibility of the STAR member to notify the director of security at the beginning of the on-call shift.
 - (D) If the on-call STAR team member is impaired when called, the individual may not be expected to report to the facility, but may be subject to disciplinary action.
 - (E) Any STAR member who is unavailable when called or fails to respond to a page for any reason on three (3) or more occasions in a 12-month period will be dismissed from the STAR team.
- (5) If not on-call, a STAR team member must respond to the team leader or designee within 15 minutes any time he/she is paged.
- (6) STAR team members must attend mandatory training and/or meetings as scheduled. Any STAR team member who has three (3) or more absences in a 12-month period from a scheduled training or meeting will be dismissed from the STAR team.

(d) **Salary Compensation**

STAR team members will be compensated \$40.00 per month and STAR team leaders will be compensated \$50.00 per month. STAR team members will also be eligible to receive up to four (4) hours of paid overtime for any STAR training or unannounced drill. Overtime that exceeds the 4-hour maximum will be compensated by allowing time off equaling time and a half. In case of an actual emergency, STAR team members who work will receive regular pay or overtime pay if they exceed 40 hours for the workweek they are on-duty.
