

General Order

Houston Police Department



ISSUE DATE:

June 5, 2025

NO.

600-40

REFERENCE: Supersedes all prior conflicting Circulars and Directives, and General Order 600-40, dated February 8, 2022

SUBJECT: DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE TEAMS AND FORFEITURE ABATEMENT SUPPORT TEAM

POLICY

Patrol divisions shall use non-traditional patrol methods including Differential Response Teams and the Narcotics Division's Forfeiture Abatement Support Team to address illegal activities, nuisances, and quality of life issues in the City of Houston.

This General Order applies to all employees.

DEFINITIONS

Common Nuisance. A place a person knowingly maintains where people habitually go, in direct violation of the Penal or Health and Safety codes, for any of the following purposes:

- a. Prostitution, promotion of prostitution, or aggravated promotion of prostitution.
- b. Gambling, gambling promotion, or communicating gambling information.
- c. Discharging a firearm in a public place or reckless discharge of a firearm.
- d. Engaging in organized criminal activity as a member of a combination (i.e., three or more persons who collaborate in conducting criminal activities).
- e. Delivering, possessing, manufacturing, or using a controlled substance.
- f. Trafficking of persons.
- g. Any other conduct or condition as described specifically in chapter 125 of the Texas Civil Practice and Remedies Code or other applicable law.

Public Nuisance. Either a combination or criminal street gang that regularly engages in gang activities, or the habitual use of a location by such a combination or gang for the purpose of conducting gang-related activities, as outlined in chapter 125 of the Texas Civil Practice and Remedies Code.

1 DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE TEAMS

A Differential Response Team (DRT) is a team of officers who use problem-solving and community policing strategies to address crime at the neighborhood level. By working with residents and businesses, DRT officers apply non-traditional methods to improve quality of life, proactively identify crime issues, and address their root causes. They combine government and private resources to reduce crime and fear, ultimately decreasing the need for police services.

All DRT officers shall attend the departmental certification training and subsequent training facilitated by the department's Citywide DRT coordinator. Civilian personnel may attend DRT training at the request of their captain.

DRT officers shall also conduct regulatory and permitting inspections, in addition to health and fire code investigations. Each DRT shall maintain case files on all investigations, which shall include DRT warning forms and regulatory inspection check sheets. Each DRT shall store digital evidence in accordance with department policy.

The Chief of Police, or the Chief's designee, shall appoint a citywide DRT coordinator who shall ensure uniformity of DRT operations among the patrol divisions. The coordinator shall supervise and schedule the DRT certification courses and annual update classes in coordination with Training Division. The DRT coordinator shall liaison with the municipal prosecutor's office and other City departments in matters relating to DRT activities. The citywide DRT coordinator shall report annually to the Chief of Police with recommendations for changes in operations or training.

2 NUISANCE ABATEMENT

When an officer identifies or is notified of a potential nuisance and the officer believes the information meets the definition of a common nuisance or public nuisance, the officer shall inform the concerned division's DRT supervisor of the problem. The officer shall also notify the Narcotics Division's Forfeiture Abatement Support Team (FAST) Unit via email at FAST@HoustonPolice.org of the potential nuisance and communicate as much information as possible (e.g., types of offenses taking place, how the officer became aware of the nuisance, any citizen contact information, and the name and contact number of the division's DRT supervisor).

Divisional DRT officers shall address nuisances, including common nuisances or public nuisances in their area of responsibility, and shall coordinate the investigation of such nuisances with the concerned division (e.g., nuisances with a narcotics nexus with Narcotics Division; nuisances with a human trafficking nexus with Vice Division) and the Crime Suppression Team (CST) over the location of the nuisance.

The FAST Unit shall assist the DRT officers and the concerned divisions by coordinating with appropriate legal departments, pursuant to their divisional standard operating procedures.

If the originating officer receives an update related to final disposition of the case, the officer shall notify the FAST Unit through the chain of command to the captain level, of the outcome.



**J. Noe Diaz, Jr.
Chief of Police**