

Peoria Police Department Policy and Procedure Manual

Policy 3.13 Critical Incident Stress Management/Peer Support



**“Our Community...
Our Commitment”**

I. POLICY (22.2.5)

It is the policy of the Peoria Police Department to provide peer and psychological support for Peoria Police Department employees involved in highly stressful situations encountered in the course of their duties. This will be accomplished through the use of a Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) and Peer Support Team. The CISM/Peer Support Team may be comprised of sworn and civilian Peoria Police Department employees, appropriate mental health professionals and other police agency CISM/Peer Support Team members who are selected on the basis of their knowledge, skill, experience, and abilities in dealing with this type of situation.

II. PROCEDURE

A. Definition - A critical incident is any situation faced by emergency service personnel that causes them to experience unusually strong emotional reactions or feelings which have the potential to interfere with their ability to function during or after the incident.

B. Composition of the CISM/Peer Support Team: Employees interested in becoming members of the CISM/Peer Support Team must submit a memorandum of interest to be considered. All CISM/Peer Support Team members are selected by the Chief of Police. The CISM/Peer Support Team may be composed of the following team members:

1. A CISM/Peer Support Team Leader who has successfully completed, at a minimum, the advanced course in CISM.
2. Team members, both sworn and civilian, who have successfully completed at least the basic course in CISM.
3. A mental health professional who has experience in emergency response situations.
4. CISM/Peer Support Team Members from other agencies will also be made available at the Team Leader's request, based on the needs of the employee(s) involved in the critical incident.
5. The Peoria Police Department Chaplain(s).

C. Family Assistance: The Peoria Police Department Chaplain, the employees' association, and any other resources available will be utilized to work out arrangements for family assistance in crisis situations.

D. Responsibilities of the CISM/Peer Support Team

1. The CISM/Peer Support Team will respond upon request of a Bureau Lieutenant/Manager, Duty Commander, or the Team Leader to any incident where an employee(s) has/have been subjected to significantly abnormal stress either during or after a police incident. Examples of incidents in which the CISM/Peer Support Team may be activated are:

- a. Officer involved shooting.
- b. Line of duty deaths.
- c. Serious line of duty injuries.
- d. Major disaster scenes.
- e. Prolonged or tactical operations.
- f. Serious injury/death of a child.
- g. Situations involving other City of Peoria Departments, based upon request.

2. The CISM/Peer Support Team members may also be activated by a Bureau Lieutenant/Manager, with the approval of the Chief of Police, for other stressful situations. Stressful situations may include an unexpected death of an employee, or the serious injury/death of a family member, etc. The CISM/Peer Support Team may also be called upon by other departments to provide service/support as needed.

- a. Activation of all or a portion of the CISM/Peer Support Team may be made depending upon the type and scope of the incident and the number of employees involved.
- b. When a request is made for a call-out of the CISM/Peer Support Team, the team leader will be contacted and advised of the nature of the incident.
- c. The team leader will determine the number of members required and contact them accordingly.

3. The CISM/Peer Support Team will delay any contacts except as directed or permitted by the supervisor in charge. However, a CISM/Peer Support Team member may be present, if requested, to give emotional support.

4. The CISM/Peer Support Team will be appropriately compensated when formally activated to assist with an official department need for support or debriefing.

E. Debriefing Needs

1. At the conclusion of a critical incident, the appropriate Bureau Lieutenant/Manager, or the CISM/Peer Support Team Leader, may determine that a debriefing is recommended for employees who were directly or indirectly involved in the critical incident. Debriefings are normally voluntary; however, participation can be mandatory at the discretion of the CISM/Peer Support Team Leader, at which time employees will be appropriately compensated. Debriefings will normally be held within three (3) days of the critical incident. Examples of types of incidents that may result in a debriefing include:

- a. Line of duty death of an employee.

- b. Officer involved shooting.
- c. Serious line of duty injury to an employee.
- d. Unexpected death of an employee, including suicide.
- e. Serious injury to a citizen as a result of a police action.

F. Diffusing and Peer Support Needs: The CISM/Peer Support Team can also provide diffusing and peer support contacts that involve informal one-on-one interaction between a team member and an employee to provide support, education, and referral services.

1. An employee who desires to speak to a team member in regards to a diffusing or peer support situation may communicate directly with a team member, without the knowledge or approval of supervisory personnel.

- a. The content of the contact and the fact that the contact was made shall remain confidential, subject to the provisions of this policy.
- b. These contacts are short term in nature and are designed to address the immediate needs of the employee.
- c. Depending upon the nature of the employee's needs, a professional referral for counseling may be recommended.

2. Informal one-on-one peer counseling/support will not be compensated on duty as compensation would prompt the generation of a report and other related documentation that may breach the confidentiality of the counseling.

3. Where appropriate, a CISM team member will contact family members of involved Peoria Police Department employees to offer various levels of support.

4. Confidentiality shall be maintained by CISM/Peer Support Team members on the information received from the individual employee.

a. Confidentiality shall be extended to employees during contacts by a CISM/Peer Support Team member(s) for violations of Peoria Police Department policy not amounting to a violation of the law enforced by the Peoria Police Department, and where there is no immediate threat to the employee or others. Policy violations amounting to a violation of the law or, in cases involving immediate threats to others, will be documented by the CISM/Peer Support Team members and submitted to the Chief of Police for review and/or appropriate action.

b. Compromising a confidence will be considered a violation of Peoria Police Department policy. Members of the CISM/Peer Support Team who violate the confidentiality of an employee contact will be subject to disciplinary action and removal from the team.

c. Accusations of a breach of confidentiality by a CISM/Peer Support Member will be made in writing and submitted directly to the Chief of Police for review and/or appropriate action.

G. CISM/Peer Support Operations Annual Review:

1. The CISM/Peer Support Team Leader will conduct an annual review (due in October) of CISM/Peer Support related operations.

2. Based on this review, the program will be maintained, altered, or discontinued, and procedures for handling CISM/Peer Support matters may be revised.

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APPROVED: 
David C. Leonardo
Chief of Police