

**ORLANDO POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE
1502.0, CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT TEAM**

EFFECTIVE:	06/15/04
RESCINDS:	OP-62
DISTRIBUTION:	ALL EMPLOYEES
REVIEW RESPONSIBILITY:	CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT TEAM COMMANDER
ACCREDITATION CHAPTERS:	NONE
CHIEF OF POLICE:	JOHN W. MINA

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POLICY: It shall be the policy of this Department to provide every employee and their family with the needed emotional and psychological support associated with their involvement in a critical incident.

PROCEDURES:

1. DEFINITIONS

Critical Incident: A critical incident is any event that is extraordinary and produces significant reactions in Department personnel.

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM): CISM represents an integrated, comprehensive multi-component crisis intervention program to support personnel involved in a critical incident.

Demobilization: CISM strategy used during mass disasters, by providing quick informational and rest sessions to operational units at a major incident requiring over 100 personnel.

2. CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT (CISM)

CISM concerns the support of personnel within the organization. It is designed to maintain the health and productivity of our employees, help prevent traumatic stress effects from becoming disabling, mitigate stress effects from critical incidents, restore personnel to normal functions, speed recovery from stress, and to enhance the overall environment in which each employee works.

3. CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT (CISM) TEAM

3.1 CISM TEAM MEMBERS

The CISM Team shall consist of employees, trained in stress-related intervention, and mental health professionals oriented to the workings of a law enforcement agency.

The sole purpose of the CISM Team and the major concern of this Department in providing the services of the Team is to assist employees in coping with what they experience at certain highly traumatic events, and to provide support and education about critical incident stress. The CISM Team member is not an investigator involved in the administrative and/or criminal investigation of the critical incident.

3.2 ON-SCENE SUPPORT

CISM Team members summoned to major scenes shall maintain a low profile, act as observers remaining in the outer perimeter unless otherwise directed by a CISM Team leader. Any adverse stress reactions observed by CISM Team members shall be reported to a CISM Team Leader. If, in the opinion of the Team Leader the affected person is incapable of performing assigned duties, the incident commander shall be notified with recommendations.

During major events in which the CISM Team is activated, the CISM Team Commander shall be allowed in or near the command post to act as an observer and act as a liaison to the Incident Commander. The CISM Team Commander shall not become involved in the operations of the incident nor shall he/she have any command authority.

Under some circumstances it may be necessary for CISM Team members to conduct one-on-one interventions at the scene. These interventions shall be brief and supportive in nature. Under no circumstances shall group interventions be done on the scene.

3.3 DEFUSING

Off-scene defusing can be an individual or group process. These defusings shall be conducted one to three hours after the incident, if possible, and in a comfortable, quiet location away from the scene.

The primary purpose for the off-scene defusing is to educate personnel of possible stress reactions and to educate personnel of proper care for themselves (i.e., food, rest, things to avoid, etc.)

Personnel are encouraged to “unwind” during this session and ventilate feelings and emotions if they are comfortable in doing so. CISM Team members shall make themselves available for individuals who would like to talk one-on-one after the defusing.

CISM Team members shall ensure that this session does not turn into a critique of the incident.

3.4 DEBRIEFING

The formal debriefing process serves to mitigate the stress impact resulting from exposure to a critical incident through ventilation of feelings and emotions along with informational and educational components. The use of cross-trained mental health professionals and peer support personnel has proven to be the most beneficial and accepted method of intervention. It produces a therapeutic effect and hastens the recovery process by allowing participants to understand their own stress responses and to see that others have similar responses.

A formal debriefing is mandatory for those employees involved in the duty-related death or serious injury of a co-worker, mass casualty cases, and any other incident the Lead Mental Health Professional, the CISM Team Commander, or Incident Commander deem appropriate.

The formal debriefing shall generally be held between 48 and 72 hours after the incident. The Lead Mental Health Professional shall conduct the formal debriefing with the assistance of peer support personnel selected by the CISM Team Commander.

There shall be no media or uninvolved observers allowed in the debriefing. Note taking, recorders, or video equipment shall not be allowed.

All personnel involved in the formal debriefing shall give their full attention to the debriefing session; therefore, police radios, telephone calls, and other interruptions shall not be allowed.

Personnel are reminded that the formal debriefing session is not a critique. Judgment calls or use of rank authority are not appropriate for a setting of this nature.

4. CONFIDENTIALITY

It shall be the duty of all CISM Team members, while acting in that capacity, to keep information communicated to them as confidential. Debriefings, defusings, and one-on-one interventions, including topics discussed and personnel involved, shall be maintained in the strictest confidence unless compelled to do so by law or court order.

No notes or other records shall be made of any CISM discussions, and no communications shall be written.

All one-on-one sessions conducted by licensed mental health professionals are confidential and under Florida State Statutes 491.0147 considered privileged communications, therefore, not subject to subpoena.

CISM Team members must abide by the spirit of this confidentiality statement. Failure to do so shall result in immediate removal from the team.

5. NOTIFICATION

5.1 WATCH COMMANDER

Any Watch Commander or Acting Watch Commander may activate a CISM Team by instructing the Communications Section Supervisor to contact the CISM Team Commander or an on-call supervisor. The Communications Section has a list of Team members and the identity of the on-call supervisor.

5.2 MANDATORY NOTIFICATION

The CISM Team Commander shall be notified when any of the following occur:

- a. Death or serious injury to any Orlando Police Department employee, occurring on or off duty.
- b. Death or serious injury to another at the hands of any Orlando Police Department employee, occurring on or off duty.
- c. Officers involved in shootings occurring on or off duty.
- d. Mass casualty cases.

5.3 DISCRETIONARY NOTIFICATION

At the discretion of the Watch Commander, the CISM Team Commander or on-call supervisor may be notified when any of the following occur.

- a. Cases involving the death or serious injury of children with significant officer involvement.
- b. SWAT/CRISIS Team emergency call out.
- c. Accident cases involving death or serious injury.
- d. Other law enforcement agencies requesting CISM Team assistance.

The CISM Team Commander shall make a determination as to the appropriate response of CISM Team members.

6. ROLE OF POLICE CHAPLAIN

The Police Chaplain shall perform under the guidelines of current policy and procedure and assist the CISM Team as needed.

7. DEATH OR SERIOUS INJURY OF A CIVILIAN AT THE HANDS OF THE POLICE

7.1 PHILOSOPHY

The CISM Team recognizes the need to maintain the integrity of an internal investigation and/or criminal investigation of the facts surrounding the serious injury or death of a civilian at the hands of the police.

For this reason, those officers directly involved in such an incident shall be handled in a manner outside the normal working mechanism for formal CISM debriefings. Further, employees directly involved in such an incident may be relieved from active duty for up to five working days with pay. The Chief of Police may approve additional paid days if circumstances require.

7.2 SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES

7.2.1 AT THE SCENE

The involved employee's immediate supervisor and a CISM Supervisor shall respond immediately to the scene.

- a. The Field Supervisor shall make the necessary Departmental notifications.
- b. The CISM Supervisor shall make personal contact with the involved employee and separate him/her from the scene as soon as practicable.
- c. The Field Supervisor shall retain authority over the scene unless relieved.
- d. The CISM Supervisor shall assume responsibility for assuring the remaining sections of this procedure are implemented.

7.2.2 AT THE STATION

The CISM Supervisor (or designee) shall assure that the following actions are taken:

- a. Notification of an EAP Counselor (preferably one trained in CISM) and request that the counselor respond and contact the involved employee.
- b. The involved employee is allowed to contact a spouse or family member, if desired. If that person is to join the involved employee, the Watch Commander may dispatch a sworn officer to accompany or transport the person.
- c. Upon arrival, the counselor shall be briefed by the CISM Supervisor (or designee) on the circumstances of the incident and shall be provided with all reasonable assistance.

7.3 PEER SUPPORT

Research on law enforcement officers at local, state, and federal levels indicate that peer support (both proximate and long-term) is one of, if not the most, beneficial type of help traumatized people can receive.

A CISM Team member shall be assigned to each involved employee to provide support and assistance until such time as the involved employee is stabilized at home. Involved employees may elect to contact a peer support person of their choosing in lieu of the CISM Team member.

If the peer support person is an on-duty employee, that employee shall be excused from other duties. If the peer support person is an off-duty employee, the Watch Commander shall authorize overtime. The CISM Supervisor or the involved employee's supervisor shall make the necessary contact with the peer support person.

7.4 IMMEDIATE POST INCIDENT CONSIDERATIONS

7.4.1 The involved employee shall be afforded the following considerations:

- a. He/she shall be allowed to calm down in a stable, private location.
- b. With prior approval of the Criminal Investigations Division and the Internal Affairs Division, the employee shall be permitted to clean up, shower, and/or change clothing.
- c. The employee's personal needs should be met, such as family response and religious considerations.
- d. The employee shall be permitted to obtain some fluids and/or food if desired.

7.4.2 PEER SUPPORT

If the arriving peer support person is an Orlando Police Department employee, the temporarily assigned CISM Supervisor or member would leave. If the peer support person is a non-member, the temporarily assigned CISM Supervisor or member would remain available until relieved by proper authority.

7.4.3 COUNSELOR

Upon arrival, the psychologist shall make a personal introduction to the involved employee, and the spouse or family members, and offer his/her services, if desired, at that time.

The counselor shall provide the employee, the spouse, and family members with a way to contact him/her at any time, should the need arise.

7.5 COUNSELING

The involved employee's Section Commander shall make a supervisory referral to EAP within 24 hours of the incident and notify the employee of the date and time of the appointment, per the current issue of 2202, Employee Assistance/Fitness for Duty.

EAP counseling shall be confidential and shall not be conducted at a Department facility. EAP counseling shall be at no cost to the employee and the employee's family.

EAP counseling may continue after the first session if requested by the involved employee and the EAP counselor.

7.6 EMPLOYEE INJURED

In the event that the involved employee is injured and/or hospitalized, the Field Supervisor and CISM Supervisor shall make every effort to follow this procedure within the constraints of emergency medical priorities.

In the event the involved employee is seriously injured and hospitalized, the counselor shall respond and make contact with the employee's spouse or family. The counselor shall advise the spouse and family members of how to contact him/her at any time.

8. MASS DISASTERS

The CISM component utilized during mass disasters is demobilization. CISM will respond to facilitate these quick informational and rest sessions for personnel actively involved in the operations. Immediately after work teams have been released from their assignments, employees will be directed to the location set aside for demobilization. CISM will conduct a brief information session assessing the well-being of personnel, mitigating the impact of the event, supplying stress management information, and providing an opportunity to rest before returning to duty.