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			Distribution: All
	Title: EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PLAN		Section: Personnel
Issued: 05/08/2012		Effective: 05/16/2012	Revised: 07/02/2025
Rescinds: All Previous			Amends: 06/26/2024
CALEA References: LE 22.1.7; COM 2.2.6			
KLEAP References: 3.2.3			
State/Federal Statutes:			
Review: Annual		Authority: Chief Buck Buchanan	

## I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the department's response to personnel requiring mental health services.

## II. Policy


The department recognizes that members may experience stress and emotional difficulties related to their exposure to critical incidents through employment, family, or other responsibilities. Emotional problems may have a negative impact on personnel performance, and in extreme instances, may present a danger to the welfare and safety of the employee, their families, the general public, and fellow co-workers. Therefore, it is the policy of this department to provide all personnel with confidential, appropriate, and timely problem assessment services to help them preempt and resolve emotional difficulties and, under emergency conditions, to take those measures necessary in the provision of mental health services to ensure the well-being and safety of employees and the general public (LE 22.1.7a; COM 2.2.6b; KLEAP 3.2.3a-c).

## III. Definitions

- A. Critical Stress Incident:** Any event that has a stressful impact sufficient enough to overwhelm the usually effective coping skills of an individual. Critical incidents are abrupt, powerful events that fall outside the range of ordinary human experiences.
- B. Mental Health Professional:** A licensed professional, departmentally authorized social or mental health case worker, counselor, psychotherapist, psychologist, or psychiatrist.

## IV. Regulations


(This section intentionally left blank).

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## V. Procedures

### A. Professional Mental Health Services

1. Mental health service providers are available to all employees of this agency and their families as allowed by personal insurance coverage or the procedures outlined below. Use of the services because of a department mandate shall be treated in the same manner as any other work-related illness or disability. The Employee Assistance Plan (EAP) mental health provider and their phone number will be posted in the break room.
2. The services of mental health professionals may be invoked by employee self-referral or referral of a supervisor through the Chief of Police or by policy following life-threatening, traumatic experiences (LE 22.1.7c; COM 2.2.6b).
3. The City of Andover will pay for up to twelve (12) self-referrals for employees and/or eligible family members needing assistance for emotional difficulties per household, per year. The EAP provider will send bills, with identifying information redacted, to the City for payment. Employees wishing to use the EAP should do the following (LE 22.1.7b & c; COM 2.2.6b):
  - a. Contact the EAP provider to schedule an EAP appointment. Tell the EAP provider that you are an employee of the City of Andover and would like to schedule an EAP appointment.
  - b. Take a pay stub or employee identification card with you to the appointment.
  - c. If after twelve (12) appointments, the employee would like to continue seeing the counselor, the employee should contact their personal health insurance provider to determine if the counselor is a covered provider by their health insurance company and if a referral from their primary care provider is required. If the provider is not covered by the employee's health insurance, the employee should ask for a list of approved providers for whatever mental health services are being sought.
4. Supervisory personnel are responsible for continuously monitoring personnel performance and behavior and shall be alert to behavioral indicators that suggest emotional problems. These include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Uncharacteristic or repeated citizen complaints, particularly those related to excessive force;
  - b. Abrupt changes in prescribed officer response or behavior such as excessive tardiness, absenteeism, abnormal impatience, irritability or aggressiveness, or repeated instances of overreaction or failure to act in the line of duty.
  - c. Irrational or bizarre thoughts or actions;
  - d. Unexplained changes in work habits or patterns of leave usage;
  - e. Erratic mood swings;
  - f. Indications of alcohol or drug abuse.

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5. Supervisory personnel who observe or receive information regarding the above types of behavior shall consult with the employee for an explanation and, where necessary, may confer with mental health professionals for guidance (LE 22.1.7c; COM 2.2.6b).
6. Where circumstances indicate, the supervisor shall suggest a voluntary self-referral to the employee. Where emotional impairment/dysfunction is suspected, either prior to or following these consultations, supervisors may contact the Chief of Police to determine whether an administrative referral to mental health professionals is warranted (LE 22.1.7d & e; COM 2.2.6b).
7. Under emergency conditions, when an employee's behavior constitutes a significant danger to themselves or others, a supervisor may order their direct and immediate referral for mental health evaluation. The mental health professional shall be contacted for instructions prior to referral, and transportation shall be provided for the employee. The Chief of Police shall be immediately notified (LE 22.1.7c, d, & e, COM 2.2.6b).
8. In instances where the Chief of Police believes that an employee is experiencing serious or debilitating emotional or psychological problems, the Chief of Police shall direct that the employee be interviewed by a department-authorized mental health provider (LE 22.1.7d & e; COM 2.2.6b).
  - a. A written copy of the referral order shall be forwarded to the employee and to the mental health service provider.
  - b. The Chief of Police shall take all necessary steps to ensure the confidentiality of the referral order and its contents and shall restrict access to those persons with a legitimate need to know (LE 22.1.7c).
9. The mental health professional shall:
  - a. Maintain the confidentiality of all communications concerning the referral and its findings (LE 22.1.7c);
  - b. Acknowledge receipt of the order and advise whether the officer responded; and
  - c. Advise the Chief of Police of the employee's fitness for duty and provide recommendations for assignment.
10. Following the mental health assessment, an employee may be returned to the original duty assignment, reassigned to alternative duty, placed on temporary light duty, placed on administrative leave as deemed appropriate, or permanently removed from duty (COM 2.2.6 a & d).
  - a. An employee's work status shall be reevaluated every 30 days while under the care of a mental health professional or until such care has been terminated.
  - b. An employee may be returned to regular duty, his work assignment may be modified or he may be temporarily or permanently relieved from duty at any time in accordance with recommendations of the mental health


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professional. The employee's powers of arrest, if applicable, may also be terminated or suspended in accordance with the above recommendations.

- c. Reinstatement to regular duty of any employee requires the affirmative recommendation of an agency-authorized psychologist/psychiatrist.
11. Job security and promotional opportunities should not be jeopardized for an employee solely for having participated in psychological counseling services. However, failure to seek treatment to correct deficiencies in job performance may reduce or eliminate promotional consideration or jeopardize continued employment.
12. Nothing in this General Order changes an employee's "at-will" employment status with the department, which means that either the department or the employee may terminate the employment relationship at any time, for any reason, or no reason at all, with or without notice.
13. Supervisory personnel will receive training in EAP services including supervisory roles and responsibilities, and identification of employee behaviors that would indicate the existence of employee concerns, problems, and/or issues that could impact employee job performance (LE 22.1.7f; COM 2.2.6c).

#### **B. Critical Stress Incidents**

1. Critical incidents become traumatic when sworn or non-sworn personnel have been involved in a critical incident(s) and experience some degree of cognitive, emotional or psychological decompensation, or discomfort associated with the incident.
2. Critical incidents are often sudden and unexpected events that can leave the person affected feeling emotionally and psychologically overwhelmed, feeling of stripped psychological defenses, that often involve perceptions of death, threat to life, or involve bodily injury.
3. Persons experiencing a critical stress incident could experience the following perceptual distortions:
  - a. Loss of control;
  - b. Amplified, diminished, or muted sound;
  - c. The feeling of slowing or accelerating time;
  - d. Heightened visual clarity or vivid images;
  - e. Tunnel vision, visual illusion or hallucinations;
  - f. False memory, memory loss for part of the event, or part of their actions; or
  - g. Feeling of being on automatic pilot.
4. After experiencing a critical stress incident, persons could experience the following:
  - a. Heighted sense of danger;
  - b. Anger, frustration and/or blaming;
  - c. Isolation and withdrawal;

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- d. Sleep difficulties;
  - e. Intrusive thoughts or emotional numbing;
  - f. Depression and feelings of guilt;
  - g. Increase alcohol or drug use;
  - h. Changes in appetite;
  - i. Second-guessing and endless rethinking of the incident; or
  - j. No depression and feelings of having done well.
5. Supervisors may temporarily relieve an employee from duty with pay when a supervisor personally observes any cognitive, emotional, and psychological decompensation following a traumatic critical incident (COM 2.2.6a).
  6. If a supervisor relieves an employee from duty, the supervisor will immediately contact the Duty Chief. The Duty Chief will immediately notify the employee's chain of command, up to and including the Chief of Police.
  7. Supervisors who observe signs or behaviors in a sworn employee following a Critical Stress Incident that constitute a significant danger to themselves or others, may relieve the sworn member of their duty weapons prior to their release of duty.
  8. The supervisor giving the relief order and the employee being relieved shall report to the Chief of Police at 9 a.m. on the next business day unless otherwise directed by a commanding officer.