

	<p style="text-align: center;">BRIDGEPORT POLICE DEPARTMENT</p> <p style="text-align: center;">POLICY AND PROCEDURE GENERAL ORDER</p>	Distribution	General Order Number
		ALL PERSONNEL	8.17
		Original Issue Date	Reissue/Effective Date
		4/20/21	11/16/2022
<p>Order Title:</p> <p>PERIODIC MENTAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT</p>	Accreditation Standard:		Section
	NA		8
		Section Title PERSONNEL	
Rescinds:		Rebeca Garcia, Chief of Police	

This General Order is for departmental use only and does not apply in any criminal or civil proceeding. This General Order should not be construed as creation of a higher legal standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense with respect to third party claims. Violations of this General Order will only form the basis for departmental administrative sanctions. Violations of law will form the basis for civil and criminal sanctions in a recognized judicial setting

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the Bridgeport Police Department Periodic Mental Health Assessment as required under the Police Accountability Act, HB 6004. Periodic mental health wellness checks have existed for law enforcement officers for many years. In accordance with Section 16 of the Police Accountability Bill, (HB6004), it is recommended that a broad scope of officer wellness, not exclusive to PTSD, be part of a mental health wellness check of P.O.ST.C. certified law enforcement officers be performed every (5) years. While P.T.S.D. is a concern for law enforcement officers, prevalent data suggest that issues such as substance abuse, depression, family issues, and suicide are also impactful on an officer's life and are mental health concerns that need to be assessed in the wellness checks.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Bridgeport Police Department to support the mental health needs of its employees and to have the mental health of its sworn employees evaluated no less than once every five (5) years.

III. DEFINITIONS

P.T.S.D.: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Board Certified Psychologist/Psychiatrist: A licensed professional certified by the American Board of Psychology.

Licensed Clinical Social Worker: A person who has been licensed as a clinical social worker by the State of Connecticut Pursuant to C.G.S. §§20-195m, et. seq.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Generally

1. Every (5) years, and under the direction of the Chief of Police, the Bridgeport Police Department, shall ensure that sworn officers participate in a periodic mental health assessment. The Bridgeport Police Department will determine the number of officers to participate in the wellness checks each year, ensuring that officers are screened every (5) years. (This will likely occur at a rate of 20% of sworn personnel each year, accomplishing a rolling (5) year cycle).
2. The periodic mental health assessment shall consist of an approximately 45 minute scheduled meeting that will explore the officers overall “mental health wellness”. This assessment shall identify, if any, issues that may require further treatment and/or evaluation. If further treatment and/or evaluation is needed, appropriate referrals shall be made to relevant resources.
3. These wellness checks shall be performed by a Board Certified Psychologist or Psychiatrist, or a Licensed Clinical Social Worker.

B. Reporting

1. A final report prepared by the evaluator shall include information pertaining to an officer’s attendance and participation in the wellness assessment, and shall be made available to both the officer and the Chief of Police upon completion. These reports shall contain no clinical information. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements and confidentiality restrictions shall apply to these visits.

C. Danger to Self or Others

1. In the event that an evaluator determines that an officer is a danger to themselves or the public, a report will be immediately sent to the Chief of Police delineating those concerns. In those instances, the Chief of Police shall make a determination as to whether a comprehensive fitness for duty evaluation shall be performed and what measures will be taken to place the officer in a modified duty assignment.

D. Confidentiality

1. Mental health services are normally confidential, and the agency will not normally be notified if an employee seeks voluntary treatment beyond the scope of the mental health checks, but some exceptions to confidentiality exist.

2. These exceptions include, but are not limited to expressions of an intent to hurt one's self, expression of an intent to hurt others, elder or child abuse, or involvement in criminal activity, or other information divulged that would require a fitness for duty evaluation.
3. Periodic Mental Health Assessments as required under the General Order and C.G.S. § 7-291e, are protected mental health care services as defined in C.G.S. §7-291d. As such, the department is prohibited from taking adverse employment action against an officer **solely** because the officer seeks or receives mental health care services. This protection is not extended to an officer who seeks mental health care services to avoid disciplinary action or an officer who refuses to submit to the Periodic Mental Health Assessment as required by this General Order and C.G.S. §7-291e.

E. Ongoing or Continuing Treatment

1. Employees who wish to continue treatment beyond the required Periodic Mental Health Assessment should consult with the evaluator and explore opportunities through the Bridgeport Police Department EAP program (*See G.O. 8.10: Employee Assistance Program*) or their individual insurance. Additional information on these resources can be found in the City of Bridgeport Human Resources Department.