



Colorado Springs Police Department Standard Operating Procedure

COM-151 Behavioral Health Incident Response

Public Safety Communications Center

Effective Date: 8/20/2025

Supersedes Date: 6/16/2025

.01 Purpose

This procedure provides guidance in processing calls for service when a person is experiencing a behavioral health crisis or when resources for behavioral health are requested.

.02 Cross Reference

[1020-22 Responses to Suicide Attempts](#)

[1090 Community Response Team](#)

[COM-100 Call for Service Procedures](#)

.03 Definitions

Alternate Response Team (ART): A specialized unit with the Colorado Springs Fire Department (CSFD) designed to address low-risk behavioral health incidents. The team consists of a Crisis Navigator and Emergency Medical Technician (EMT).

Behavioral Health Crisis: Means a visible episode of significant emotional or psychological distress that causes noticeable disruption in behavior, speech, or mood, and is recognized as upsetting by the person or others.

Colorado 988 (988): The 3-digit phone number in the United States for the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. In Colorado, 988 is managed by the Colorado State Behavioral Health Administration (BHA). Contact can be made by phone, text, or app chat. The Colorado Springs Police Department (CSPD) has an active memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Colorado 988.

Community Response Team (CRT): A specialized unit consisting of a CSPD police officer, CSFD paramedic and a mental health clinician designed to address high-risk behavioral health incidents where immediate care and/or navigation is needed.

Emergency Mental Health Hold (“M-1”): Means an involuntary mental health hold and transport in protective custody to a designated facility if there is probable cause that the person 1) has a mental health disorder and 2) as a result of the mental health disorder, is an imminent danger to the person’s self or others or is gravely disabled. An intellectual or development disability is insufficient to justify a finding of a mental health disorder. (CRS § 27-65-106)

Emergency Transportation Hold (“M.5”): Means an involuntary transportation in protective custody for evaluation by a designated facility to determine if the person meets the criteria for an Emergency Mental Health Hold, if there is probable cause that the person 1) is experiencing a behavioral health crisis or is gravely disabled and 2) as a result, without professional intervention the person may be a danger to the person’s self or others. (CRS § 27-65-107). The statutory definition of behavioral health crisis for this hold is “a significant disruption in a person’s mental or emotional stability or functioning resulting in an urgent need for immediate assessment and treatment to prevent a serious deterioration in the person’s mental or physical health” (CRS § 27-65-102).

.04 Procedure

Experiencing a BHC is not a crime in Colorado, but behaviors exhibited by people in a BHC could be a crime therefore CSPD must balance public safety with an appropriate response to facilitate proper treatment. Accurate descriptions of the behaviors are paramount in determining the proper navigation of a person in a BHC.

Primary Call Type Codes

- CTW Check the Welfare
- SUIC Suicide or Attempt
- MED Medical
- VIOL Violent Injuries

Call Taker Procedure

988 Referrals

988 is a free, immediate, 24/7 confidential behavioral health support system staffed by a private company contracted with the Colorado BHA. 988 is staffed by mental health technicians who are trained to evaluate the situation to provide resolutions for the current situation or navigation for future follow-up.

Juvenile callers may be referred to 988 without parental consent. Colorado House Bill 19-1120 allows juveniles to contact 988 and allows 988 to speak to juveniles without parental consent. Concerns or complaints about a juvenile being transferred to 988 will be reviewed by a communications Supervisor and if needed, forwarded to 988 for resolution.

To reduce the need for CSPD and CSFD to respond to certain BHC calls, the Communications Center will consider the use of 988 when processing calls in the following circumstances:

- Suicidal Ideations
- Substance Abuse
 - Non active use of substances (i.e. a person asking for resources to gain sobriety)
- Depressed/despondent persons
- People with anxiety that have no priority medical symptoms requiring an emergency medical response
- Frequent callers experiencing a BHC with no identified need for a CSPD or CSFD response
- 3rd party outreach for BHC reasons (i.e. “my friend posted a message on social media”).
 - The phrase “check the welfare” should not be used to avoid a vocabulary conflict that will require 988 to send the call back.

If any of the following circumstances are present during the call it will not be transferred to 988:

- Callers describing medical symptoms requiring an emergency medical response.
- Active suicide attempt
- Criminal activity occurring
- Violence
 - Towards themselves or others
- Weapons actively involved
 - As an example, a caller reports they want to shoot themselves **and** have a gun in their possession.
 - A statement of having a weapon in the same location does not require an in-person response.
- Threatened use of weapons with access
 - Statements that lead the call taker to believe the individual in crisis is actively or will soon introduce a weapon.
 - A statement of having a weapon in the same location but not actively involved does not require an in-person response.

The decision to transfer a caller to 988 should be made based on the above criteria; nothing in this procedure specifies an IAED protocol be used to determine if a call is 988 eligible.

If a call qualifies for 988 the call taker will use the 1 button 988 transfer in the phone software. This number is a pre-programmed 10-digit telephone number that identifies CSPD automatically with 988 staff. The call taker will preface all calls with the 988 technician before disconnecting; the preface will be the same preface used to transfer a 911 call to another PSAP. After prefacing the call, the call taker will disconnect without further instructions or questions to the caller. The call for service will be cancelled using CAN988 at the CAD command line to cancel the call while auto fill remarks of *Call Cancelled. Referred to Colorado 988.*

The communications center will not refer or direct callers to 988 through means of text or app chat; all calls referred from the communications center will be transferred to the pre-programmed phone number.

If 988 staff believes the incident does, or begins to involve an active suicide attempt, violence, weapons, or threat of introducing weapons with access, they will return the call to the CSPD alarm line. Calls returned to CSPD from a 988 technician **will require** a CSFD and/or CSPD response outlined later in this procedure.

3rd Party Outreach

When the Communications Center receives a 3rd party calling about a person experiencing a behavioral health crisis that meets the criteria for a 988 transfer, the call taker will transfer the 3rd party to 988.

Officer Referral

When officers contact people who could benefit from the services offered by 988, they can directly refer the person to 988.

Call Response

CSFD Response Only:

A person in crisis that has not taken action to harm themselves, regardless of means, methods, or planning where a referral to 988 is not appropriate or possible.

A person in crisis has taken action that does not include violence, weapons, or threatened use of weapons with access.

CSFD & CSPD Response:

- A person in crisis that involves criminal activity, violence, weapons, or the threatened use of weapons with access.

Suicidal self-inflicted gunshot wounds will be processed using police protocol 127 Suicidal Person/Attempted Suicide and medical protocol 27 Stab/Gunshot/Penetrating Trauma.

Following the above guidance, process the call utilizing the appropriate call type code and IAED protocol in accordance with [COM-100 Call for Service Procedures](#).

Dispatcher Procedure

When calls are returned to CSPD by 988, dispatchers should attempt to dispatch CRT or ART, when available, based on the call details.

Minimum Response Directive

No violence, weapons, or threatened use of weapons with access

- No response – refer to CSFD to include ART if on-duty

Violence, weapons, or threatened use of weapons with access

- 2 police or more officers
- Patrol supervisor, if necessary
- CRT, if appropriate

Notifications

- Communications Supervisor
- Duty Lieutenant