

A. PURPOSE

1. To establish guidelines for the operation of the “Cop 2 Cop Peer Support Team” which shall consist of employees trained in critical incident stress management
2. To provide every employee and their family with emotional and psychological support associated with their involvement in a critical stress incident

B. **CONFIDENTIALITY.** The Department recognizes that confidential communication between Peer Support Team members and other employees is essential for program success. This does not preclude, however, any advisement to administration of perceived psychological warning signs that an employee may not be fit for duty following a stressful incident.

C. DEFINITIONS

1. *Critical stress incident.* Any incident that is likely to cause those involved a strong emotional disturbance including Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.
2. *Critical Incident Stress Debriefing.* A structured discussion, led by employees assisted by mental health professionals, that validates employee reactions to the stress caused by the critical incident. The intent of the debriefing is to reduce the potential for post-traumatic stress disorder and other stress-related symptoms. This debriefing is usually held within 48 to 72 hours after the critical incident; however, this is only intended as a guideline.
3. *Defusing.* A smaller, scaled-down version of a critical incident stress debriefing conducted by at least two (2) members of the Peer Support Team. No mental health professionals are involved. The defusing usually takes place within 8 hours of the critical incident.

D. ORGANIZATION

1. Peer Support Team members shall be both sworn and civilian members for the Department who have gone through a selection process and who have made a two-year commitment to the Team.
2. Members shall receive initial training in critical incident stress management and will attend additional training when available.

3. The Team shall be comprised of no less than six (6) members.
4. Team members shall maintain a policy of strict confidentiality.

E. SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Arrange for and conduct defusings after critical stress incidents
2. Arrange for and conduct critical stress debriefings in conjunctions with mental health professionals
3. Provide peer support whenever necessary
4. Assist patrol personnel in death notifications
5. Assist families of employees killed in the line-of-duty
6. Assist in coordinating benefits of employees killed in the line-of-duty
7. Assist families of employees who have died (non-duty related)
8. Update Emergency Notification Forms
9. Other duties at the direction of the Chief of Police

F. PROCEDURE

1. A list of Peer Support Team members and phone numbers shall be kept with the Watch Commander.
2. The Peer Support Team may be activated by any employee that feels that they or another employee has been affected by a critical stress incident.
3. The Peer Support Team shall be notified in the following circumstances:
 - a. Line-of-duty deaths
 - b. Officer-involved shootings
 - c. Serious line-of-duty injuries
 - d. Scenes of mass casualties
 - e. Prolonged or violent tactical operations

- f. Serious injury or hospitalization of any employee
 - g. Death of an employee's immediate family member
 - h. Civilian death by police action
 - i. Any other incident likely to be traumatic to an employee
4. When notified of the need for the Peer Support Team, the Watch Commander will contact the Peer Support Team Coordinator and advise him/her of the nature of the incident. The Peer Support Team Coordinator will then determine the need for other team members to respond. If the Peer Support Team Coordinator is unavailable, a team member at the rank of sergeant or above can be contacted.
5. Defusings and debriefings shall be conducted after the following incidents:
- a. Line-of-duty deaths
 - b. Officer-involved shootings
 - c. Civilian death caused by a police action
 - d. Any other incident as determined by the Chief of Police
6. Attendance at above listed defusing and debriefing is mandatory for all personnel involved.
7. Defusings may be conducted by Peer Support Team members under any circumstance that may cause an employee a stressful reaction.