



GENERAL ORDER

Loudoun County Sheriff's Office

Chapter: Operations	Section: 409.9	
Subject: Specialized Units	Topic: Critical Incident Stress Management Team	
Accreditation: A. 23.04	Revised:	Reaffirmed:
Enacted: 07/30/2015	Last Review: 07/24/2015	Review: 07/30/2016

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to establish policy and procedure for the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office Critical Incident Stress Management Team (CISM). The mission of the CISM Team is to provide assistance to agency personnel involved with a critical incident in order to lessen the impact of the incident and to provide appropriate support service.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office to provide peer assistance to agency personnel who have been involved in a critical incident. All statements made by agency personnel and peer support persons during the course of a debriefing or defusing are strictly confidential within legal guidelines. These guidelines and their limitations will be explained before any debriefing or defusing takes place. Each CISM team member will treat each contact with the highest level of confidentiality. Unauthorized disclosure of information concerning specific incidents or employee involvement shall not occur unless such disclosure is required by exigent circumstances or ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction. CISM team members involved in a criminal or administrative incident or investigation giving rise to a request for CISM team intervention shall not be assigned to provide CISM services to other involved employees. CISM team members will not be routinely interviewed by investigative authorities concerning matters in which the CISM team member may have gained knowledge through CISM team intervention. Requests to interview CISM team members shall be directed to the Sheriff. Personnel not involved in a debriefing or defusing shall refrain from questioning CISM team members on the facts surrounding any discussion with the individuals involved in a debriefing or defusing. A debriefing is not an operational critique.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. Critical Incident Stress Management Team (CISM): A trained support group that assists Loudoun County Sheriff's Office employees who have been involved in a critical incident.
- B. Critical Incident: An event that causes an employee (individual) to experience a strong emotional reaction, which has the potential to interfere with the employee's ability to function either at the scene of the incident or at a later time.

- C. Team Coordinator: A Sheriff's Office employee who directs the CISM Team's operations and administrative functions. The Team Coordinator is selected by the Sheriff and answers directly to the Sheriff.
- D. Team Member (Peer Support Person): A Sheriff's Office employee who has been trained in critical incident stress management and has been assigned to the team by the Sheriff or his/her designee.
- E. Team Leader: A peer support person selected by the Team Coordinator to oversee the day-to-day operations of the CISM team and perform other duties as required.
- F. Assistant Team Leader: A peer support person selected by the Team Coordinator to assist the Team Leader and assume the Team Leader's functions in his/her absence.
- G. Defusing: A brief, confidential discussion between an individual and a peer support person(s) immediately following a critical incident to prepare the individual for potential future stress reactions resulting from the incident. This should be conducted in a private setting.
- H. Debriefing: A confidential meeting between an individual(s) involved in a critical incident and a member(s) of the CISM team to allow an individual(s) a chance to express his/her reactions regarding the incident and to make him/her aware of appropriate stress management techniques.
- I. Family Assistance: Assistance provided to the families of agency personnel following both off duty and line of duty deaths, serious injuries, or traumatic incidents.

IV. PROCEDURE

- A. The scene commander shall ensure that the CISM Team Coordinator and/or the CISM Team Leader or his/her designee is notified of a critical incident as soon as practical.
- B. The scene commander or on-scene supervisor may request the response of a CISM team member through contact with the CISM Team Coordinator, CISM Team Leader or his/her designee.
- C. The following incidents require the on-scene commander to immediately contact the CISM Team Coordinator, CISM Team Leader, or his/her designee:
 - 1. The death or serious injury of a Loudoun County Sheriff's Office employee
 - 2. The shooting of an individual by a Sheriff's Office deputy
 - 3. A mass casualty incident

4. Any act of violence, serious injury or death to a person that may reasonably lead to a traumatic stress reaction on the part of the employee. Special attention should be directed toward incidents involving young children.
- D. Upon request for a response, CISM team member(s) will respond to the command post and advise the scene commander of his/her arrival and await instructions.
- E. CISM team members are present to observe personnel and assist them in dealing with the current incident. Team members will not interfere with operational decisions or procedures.
- F. CISM team members will be alert for signs of stress that may be severe and will make referrals for professional mental health assistance in those cases as appropriate.
- G. CISM team members and incident supervisors must consider the impact of stress as it relates to an individual's ability to complete that day's tour of duty. Deputies who are directly involved in a critical incident shall be taken out of service, unless otherwise justified by the supervisor.
- H. Notification to the affected individual's family should be considered when dealing with a critical incident so that family members may prepare for the emotional release and/or depression that may follow a critical incident.
- I. CISM team members involved with on-scene and defusing activities will confer with the CISM Team Coordinator, Team Leader, or his/her designee to assess the need for a formal debriefing.
- J. Information regarding the times, dates and locations of formal debriefings shall not be released to the media.
- K. This policy does not preclude any Sheriff's Office employee from informally contacting any CISM team member for personal assistance.