

# Crisis Response Unit Program

## 343.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Crisis Response Unit (CRU) Program was created to diversify the response options of the City of Olympia to persons in crisis. CRU consists of unarmed civilian responders. The primary focus of CRU is fostering and building relationships within the community. CRU members have experience and training interacting with, de-escalating, stabilizing, and transporting individuals in crisis, those who may be under the influence of intoxicating substances, and who might be experiencing mental health challenges.

CRU members may be requested to connect those in crisis to resources in the community. This may include but is not limited to referrals for mental/behavioral health support or hospitalization, substance abuse detox/treatment, case management or counseling, or assistance to those experiencing homelessness.

Any services rendered by CRU members are to be expressly free and voluntary in nature.

### 343.1.1 DEFINITIONS

**Crisis services** - Actions taken to help stabilize an individual in crisis, to intervene in concerning behavior, and prevent further deterioration. Crisis services may include in-person contact, telephone support, referrals, and transportation to necessary resources.

**Person in crisis** - An individual whose level of distress or mental health symptoms have exceeded the person's internal ability and/or coping skills to manage their behavior or emotions that may cause the person to engage in erratic, disruptive, or dangerous behavior, often accompanied by impaired judgment.

## 343.2 POLICY

It is the Olympia Police Department's policy that CRU members, when available, will respond to calls involving a person in crisis and will attempt to provide crisis services. CRU members are not expected to respond to violent or dangerous situations prior to the scene being stabilized by officers.

## 343.3 FUNCTIONS

CRU members will generally work in a two-person team, responding to calls by telephone, on foot or in a CRU designated vehicle capable of transporting an individual in crisis. In the event that only one CRU member is available to respond to an in-person contact, that call shall be held until an officer is available to accompany CRU. CRU members should not be restricted to two-person contact for self-initiated activities focusing on fostering relationships in the community.

Sources of CRU calls for service may include radio dispatches, contacts from first responder personnel requesting CRU assistance, community members, and proactive intervention, which include situations in which CRU members observe someone in crisis or need of services who has not otherwise been brought to their attention. CRU members may contact persons in these

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situations when CRU deems it safe and may proceed as they would in the instance of a dispatched call for service. CRU members shall defer call response and/or proactive interactions to peace officers when CRU perceives the situations is unsafe or upon direction of a supervisor.

All CRU provided contacts, crisis intervention, transportation, and referral services shall be in response to the needs of the person in crisis and the Olympia Police Department.

#### **343.4 EMPLOYEE SAFETY**

The Department recognizes that the safety of CRU members takes priority over the safety of a person in crisis. CRU members are not expected to physically intervene in any situations involving bodily harm to the person in crisis or other persons present. Further, CRU members have the authority to leave a scene if they believe their personal safety is in jeopardy.

It is the intent of the City of Olympia that CRU members not use force while contacting or transporting persons unless such force is reasonably necessary for the defense of self or others as is lawfully allowed consistent with RCW 9A.16.020.

If a CRU member believes that a person is in immediate danger to themselves or others, the CRU member should immediately notify TCOMM and request a response from law enforcement.

Prior to peace officer arrival on a scene in which a CRU member has requested a law enforcement response, CRU members should use their own discretion as to whether or not to stay or leave the scene based on their assessment of the safety of the situation.

#### **343.5 MEDICAL INTERVENTIONS**

CRU members shall request a fire department or ambulance response whenever it appears the person(s) contacted needs emergency medical treatment. CRU members may provide first-aid to person(s) in need before the arrival of emergency medical personnel if the CRU member feels safe in providing such first aid. CRU members should only provide first-aid in a manner consistent with their training.

CRU members may transport person(s) to medical providers for non-emergency medical treatment after having been cleared by medical personnel where appropriate.

#### **343.6 INTER-JURISDICTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

CRU members may assist outside agencies with calls for services occurring within the jurisdictional boundaries of Olympia.

Generally, CRU members should not respond to calls for service from other jurisdictions occurring outside the jurisdictional boundaries of Olympia. In no case shall a CRU member respond to a request for service from outside jurisdictions outside the boundaries of Olympia without prior approval of a CRU lead.

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#### **343.7 TRANSPORTS**

When safe and feasible, CRU members may elect to transport persons in crisis or intoxicated individuals from within the City of Olympia to appropriate social services, non-emergency medical care, shelter, or treatment facilities.

CRU members shall notify dispatch at the beginning and end of all transports.

Transports will only be provided to persons who are able to enter and exit the CRU vehicles under their own power, or with minimal assistance from a CRU member.

All transports shall be provided on a voluntary basis. If during the course of the transport the person requests to end the transport, CRU members will pull over at the nearest safe location, allow the person to exit the vehicle, and notify dispatch that the transport has ended.

CRU members shall notify the person their property will be secured during the transport, and they will not have access to it during the transport. CRU members shall receive a positive acknowledgement from the transported person prior to taking possession of the property.

CRU members may terminate a transport at their discretion for any reason concerning safety. CRU members should request law enforcement assistance if the subject refuses to leave the vehicle.

Property should be stored in a safe and secure location while in the vehicle. CRU members may limit the amount of property taken during transport due to space restrictions and safety.

All property transported with a person will be returned to the same person who originally surrendered the property when their transport concludes.

##### **343.7.1 PROPERTY**

CRU Members shall not offer to store or care for any property belonging to any member of the public, outside of the duration of a transport.

##### **343.7.2 FIREARMS**

Firearms are not to be handled or transported by CRU Members at any time.

#### **343.8 COMMUNICATIONS**

The use of communication devices shall be for official business as defined in Policy 701 Personal Communication Devices, and the published standard radio procedure.

#### **343.9 SUPERVISION**

The CRU Lead Worker is responsible for supervision and oversight of operational activities of the Crisis Response Specialists. CRU Leads provide leadership, guidance, instruction, technical expertise, and accountability to the Crisis Response Specialists. CRU Leads direct the work of the Crisis Response Specialists and is responsible for assigning, delegating tasks, and for ensuring employees complete assigned tasks.

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The Outreach Services Coordinator oversees the Crisis Response Unit and manages the work of CRU Leads. Under the general direction of the Deputy Police Chief, the Outreach Services Coordinator plans, organizes, and manages the activities of the Crisis Response Unit.

#### **343.10 ALLOWABLE EXPENSES**

CRU members may use their city-issued credit cards to assist ill and infirm individuals to stabilize, provide shelter, or other safety measures. CRU members will complete a Direct Client Expense Voucher for every expense. All expenses and direct Client Expense Vouchers will be reviewed by CRU leads.

#### **343.11 TRAINING**

In coordination with the mental health community and appropriate stakeholders, the Department will develop and provide comprehensive education and training to all CRU members to enable them to effectively interact with persons in crisis.

The CRU team will participate in training on topics related to their work including, but not limited to trauma-informed response, de-escalation, situational awareness, CPR, and crisis intervention.