



# Seattle Police Department Policy Manual



## 5.175 – Critical Incident Stress Management Communications

Effective Date: 04/17/2013

### 5.175-POL

This policy applies to communications between Seattle Police Department employees and members of the SPD Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) team members.

#### **1. CISM Team Members are “Peer Support Counselors” as Defined by [RCW 5.60.060\(6\)\(b\)](#)**

The Department will also extend this designation to civilian employees who are CISM team members.

The Peer Support Coordinator and SPD Communications shall maintain a current list of CISM team members.

#### **2. Any Department Employee May Make a Referral to CISM**

Employees may refer co-workers or themselves for assistance.

- By phone: (206) 233-2765 or through SPD Communications
- By email: [SPD\\_Peer\\_Support@seattle.gov](mailto:SPD_Peer_Support@seattle.gov)

#### **3. Communications Between a Department Employee and CISM are Confidential When the CISM Team Member is Acting in an Official Capacity**

[RCW 5.60.060](#) includes CISM team members as persons protected against divulging privileged communications.

**Exception:** CISM relationships with employees are not privileged when the CISM team member is an initial responder or witness to an incident the employee is involved in that triggers a CISM relationship.

#### **4. The Department Shall Not Compel Confidential Information from CISM**

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Members of Department management, including the Office of Professional Accountability, cannot compel CISM team members to testify about any information made to them by an employee during a CISM relationship.

The Department shall not use information conveyed to CISM during a CISM relationship for discipline or other administrative proceedings involving employees.

## **5. The Employee Requesting Confidential Communication With CISM Shall Have Sole Authority to Waive Privilege**

The employee may voluntarily give the CISM team member permission to provide information.

## **6. CISM Team Members, as Department Employees, Are Still Mandatory Reporters in Certain Circumstances**

CISM team members shall report to the proper investigative unit information provided by SPD employees when it relates to:

- Injury, abuse, or neglect of a child, or vulnerable adult
- Danger of physical harm to oneself or others
- Domestic violence crimes
- Court orders issued when the counseling relationship is deemed not confidential pursuant to [RCW Chapter 5.60](#)

## **7. CISM Communications with Employees Shall Remain Confidential After the CISM Relationship Has Ceased**