# Critical Incident Stress Management Team

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**Approval Signature**

James L Whalen

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Critical Incident Stress Management Team

I. Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on how the University Of Cincinnati Police Division (UCPD) will utilize Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) and Peer Counselors to help manage and minimize the negative physical, cognitive, emotional and behavioral reactions that can occur after a critical incident.

II. Policy: It is the policy of the UCPD to utilize a CISM team to provide CISM/Peer Support as a resource to assist the well-being of the members of the UCPD and the regional public safety community.

III. Information: Law enforcement duties may expose officers and support personnel to mentally painful and highly stressful situations that cannot be resolved through normal stress coping mechanisms. Unless adequately treated, these situations may cause disabling emotional and physical problems. Having access to peer support is an essential stress management strategy that gives officers and staff the opportunity to reflect upon the incident and share their emotions with others who have experienced similar trauma. Such measures can both reduce the effect of strain over time as well as promote resiliency in the lives of officers and support personnel.

IV. Definitions:

Affected Employees: Any employee when it can be determined that they have been adversely affected by a situation or incident(s) whether on or off-duty.

Critical Incident: For the purpose of this policy, a critical incident includes, but is not limited to:
- Any officer related shooting involving a member of the police division (with the exception of the killing of an animal) whether or not officers return fire,
- Any hostage situation,
- A serious physical assault upon an officer,
- A natural disaster,
- Any incident involving multiple fatalities,
- Any sudden or violent death of a member of the police division or a member of their family,
- The suicide of any member of the police division,
- Any other time deemed necessary by any member or the police division (ex: an incident involving the death of a child, several incidents within a short period of time which may overwhelm employees, etc.)

Critical Incident Debriefing: A formal one-on-one or group discussion conducted by a qualified mental health professional and, where possible, an appropriately trained peer support member that is designed to assist participants in understanding their emotions and strengthening their coping mechanisms following a critical incident.

Critical Incident Diffusing: A one-on-one or group interaction, led by a trained Peer Counselor, usually held shortly after the incident.
**Critical Incident Stress Management Team**

**Involved Employees:** Any employee present at the scene of, or closely associated with, a critical incident who exhibit an emotional response following the incident.

**Peer:** A person trained as a Peer Counsellor that has received Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) training as prescribed by the state.

**V. Procedure:**

**A. Critical Incident Management Team**

1. **Team Coordinator:** The CISM Program Coordinator will be responsible for the deployment of the appropriate [Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) team members](#) by using briefing information to determine strategy and assignment(s). Based on the needs of the response, members may be assigned to work in a large group, as single representatives, or in small teams.

2. The Critical Incident Stress Management Team is a voluntary assignment.

3. The team will generally be made of a maximum number of 12 members consisting of a minimum of the Team Coordinator, 1 Supervisor and a minimum of 5 sworn and 5 non-sworn personnel.

4. **Selecting Team Members**

   a. Anyone who expresses interest in the assignment by submitting an Internal Correspondence Memo, Form 5, will be considered until the team reaches the maximum number of 12 members.

   b. Minimum qualifications include a satisfactory performance evaluation and completion of initial probationary period or a minimum of 12 months service with UCPD.

   c. The Team Coordinator will conduct the minimum qualification review.

**B. Training**

1. Peer training includes an initial 3 day certification through International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF) recognized by the state.

2. Annual refresher determined by the CISM coordinator.

**C. CISM Team Call Out Procedures**

1. Request for activation of the Critical Incident Stress Management Team will be directed to the Team Coordinator.

2. The Team Coordinator will communicate through the chain of command to the Police Chief for all CISM team activations.

3. This team’s response will generally be limited to supporting UC Public Safety and surrounding regional fire and police agencies in the tristate area. However, the team may be activated and respond to a national incident on a case by case basis if approved by the Director of Public Safety.

**D. Overtime**

1. All overtime must be approved by the Peer Support Coordinator or Support Services Bureau Commander prior to call out.
References

UCPD Policy 3.2.400 Overtime Use, Management and Control.