


Department of Public Safety
Police Division
Policies and Procedures

<u>Title</u> Employee Wellness and Critical Incident Stress Management	<u>SOP Number</u> 3.1.400
Approval Signature 	
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Employee Wellness and Critical Incident Stress Management

- I. Purpose:** Public safety departments have an obligation to ensure the mental and physical health and safety of their personnel. Employee wellness is not only an individual issue, but it is also an agency and public concern because the negative consequences of poor mental and physical health can impact employee performance and affect community relationships. Public safety departments are uniquely situated to address issues of employee stress and trauma, reduce the stigma of seeking help, and create an environment of support. Agencies have a duty to be aware of and provide resources relating to employees' mental and physical health.

This policy provides guidance on how the University of Cincinnati Police Division (UCPD) will utilize Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM), Peer Support Team Members, and Chaplain services to help manage and minimize the negative physical, cognitive, emotional, spiritual, and behavioral reactions that can occur after a critical incident or prolonged stress.

- II. Policy:** It is the policy of the UCPD to provide all personnel with access to mental health, peer support, and chaplain services to help preempt and resolve emotional difficulties, and to take necessary measures to ensure their wellness and safety.

It is also the policy of this agency to take immediate action after traumatic incidents to safeguard the continued mental, physical, and spiritual wellness of all personnel involved. The Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) team is part of the Hamilton County Police Association (HCPA) Wellness Team.

III. Definitions:

Affected Employees – Any employee who can be determined to have been adversely affected by a situation or incident(s), whether on or off-duty.

Be Well UC – The University of Cincinnati's official employee wellness program with a mission to educate, support, and empower faculty and staff to make healthy lifestyle choices while building a culture of well-being for our university and community. The program provides a variety of resources to support employee well-being, including educational sessions and events, health coaching, challenges, incentives, an online portal, and more.

Chaplain – A trained clergy member or designated spiritual care provider who offers confidential spiritual guidance, emotional support, crisis response, and referral services to agency personnel and their families. Chaplain services are voluntary and available regardless of an employee's religious affiliation or beliefs.

Critical Incident – For this policy, a critical incident includes, but is not limited to:

- Any officer-related shooting involving a member of the police division (except for the killing of an animal), whether or not officers return fire,

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- Any hostage situation,
- A serious physical assault upon an employee,
- 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 or family member,
- Any other time deemed necessary by any member of the police division (e.g., an incident involving the death of a child, several incidents within a short period of time which may overwhelm employees, etc.).

Employee Assistance Program (EAP): A benefit available to benefit-eligible employees and their family members, providing confidential professional support available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. All counselors are qualified master's/doctoral-level professionals.

Mental Health Services: Services provided by an agency-employed and/or agency-contracted qualified mental health professional.

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

Peer Support: A program designed to provide one-on-one emotional, social, or practical support and referrals to additional professional services when needed. The program comprises specifically trained sworn or civilian colleagues, referred to as peer support persons, who are not counselors or therapists.

Peer Support Team Members: A formal group of individuals consisting of agency members who have undergone training in peer support methods.

Qualified Mental Health Professional (QMHP): An individual licensed as a mental health professional who has an in-depth understanding of trauma-related disorders and law enforcement culture.

Traumatic Incident: An incident that may overwhelm an individual's normal coping mechanisms and cause extreme psychological distress.

IV. Procedure:

- A. The UCPD will utilize multiple resources to help manage general employee mental health and wellness and encourage staff to access the following programs:
 1. Be Well UC to aid with physical, mental, and financial wellness.
 2. Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides up to five (5) face-to-face counseling sessions per problem occurrence at no cost.

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- a. The EAP program is available to all members of the employee household, including children who live away from home, parents, and in-laws.
 3. Chaplain Services provide confidential spiritual care, emotional support, crisis response, and family assistance when requested.
- B. The Public Safety Support Services Bureau Commander or designee will evaluate additional wellness opportunities beyond Be Well UC, the EAP, and Chaplain Services to provide support tailored specifically to Public Safety personnel.
- C. The UCPD will utilize the [Critical Incident Stress Management \(CISM\) Team](#), Peer Support Team Members, and Chaplain services as resources to assist in supporting the well-being of UCPD personnel.
- D. Affected Employees may participate in wellness services, including peer support, chaplain services, or other approved mental health services, while on duty with supervisory approval.
- E. The CISM Team
1. The CISM Team will generally consist of a maximum of 12 members, including a minimum of the Team Coordinator/Supervisor, and a mix of sworn and non-sworn personnel. Chaplain(s) may serve in an advisory or support capacity during activations.
 2. The Team Coordinator will be responsible for deployment of appropriate CISM Team Members and, when appropriate, coordination with the agency Chaplain using briefing information to determine strategy and assignments. Based on response needs, members may work in large groups, as single representatives, or in small teams.
 3. Assignment to the CISM Team is voluntary.
 4. Selecting CISM Team Members
 - a. Any employee expressing interest by submitting an Internal Correspondence Memo, Form 5, will be considered until the team reaches a maximum of 12 members.
 - b. Minimum qualifications include a satisfactory performance evaluation and completion of the initial probationary period or a minimum of 12 months of service with UCPD.
 - c. The Team Coordinator will conduct the minimum qualification review.
 - d. The Team Coordinator and two (2) additional CISM Team Members will interview applicants before appointment.
 5. CISM Training
 - a. CISM includes an initial three (3) day certification through the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, recognized by the state.
 - b. The CISM Coordinator will determine annual refresher training.
 6. CISM Team Call-Out Procedures
 - a. Requests for activation of the CISM Team will be directed to the Team Coordinator.

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- b. The Team Coordinator will communicate through the chain of command to the Police Chief for all activations.
 - c. The team's response will generally be limited to supporting UC Public Safety and surrounding regional fire and police agencies in the tristate area. The team may be activated to respond to a national incident on a case-by-case basis if approved by the Director of Public Safety.
 - d. When appropriate, the Chaplain may be notified and deployed to provide spiritual and emotional support services.
7. CISM Overtime
- a. All overtime must be approved by the Peer Support Coordinator or Patrol Bureau Commander before call-out.

F. Chaplain Services

- 1. The Chaplain serves as a confidential and voluntary support resource available to all agency personnel and their immediate family members.
- 2. The Chaplain may respond to critical incidents, line-of-duty deaths, serious injuries, or other traumatic events affecting agency personnel.
- 3. The Chaplain may provide support during notifications, hospital visits, funerals, memorial services, and other significant events.
- 4. The Chaplain does not replace professional mental health services but may provide referrals to appropriate resources when needed.
- 5. Communications with the Chaplain are intended to remain confidential, consistent with applicable law and professional standards.

G. Annual Review

- 1. The CISM Team Coordinator shall conduct a documented annual administrative review of the practices of this policy to assess the effectiveness of the wellness, CISM, Peer Support, and Chaplain programs. This review may also include callouts, training, and recommendations for program improvement.
- 2. Any recommended changes will be submitted through the chain of command for approval before implementation.

References

UCPD Policy 3.2.400 Overtime Use, Management and Control.