

**GENERAL ORDERS MANUAL
WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY**

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this general order is to provide WMU Public Safety employees with appropriate assistance in the maintenance of emotional and physical wellbeing, retain valuable staff, and provide the highest level of service to the community.

Often the effects of stressful events can be dealt with successfully when they are identified in the early stages and are addressed appropriately. It is the intention of WMU to provide such services through referral to the appropriate professional service providers.

II. POLICY

All employees involved in the response to critical incidents, including support staff, may participate in a critical incident debriefing. The purpose of a debriefing is to determine the physical and psychological wellbeing of the involved personnel. The debriefing will also serve the purpose of discovering areas that can be used as training tools to improve the response and handling of such incidents.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) – a condition that may result from the experience and/or participation in an incident that presents trauma of either a physical or psychological nature. Often, anxiety symptoms or unusually strong emotional responses are persistent.
- B. Stress – a mentally or emotionally disruptive condition that is in response to external influences of an adverse nature.
- C. Trauma (Psychological) – any wound, either physical or psychological, which creates potential for lasting negative reaction to either the physical or psychological wellbeing or development of a person.
- D. Critical Incident – any situation that has the potential to evoke unusually strong, negative, emotional reactions. Extremely violent or catastrophic incidents are generally considered to be critical incidents.
- E. Critical Incident Debriefing (CID)- an educational and psychological process that is intended to address and ease the impact of a critical incident. Such a process has the potential to accelerate the recovery of personnel who may experience normal reactions to a most abnormal or intensely stressful set of circumstances.

IV. POST-SHOOTING, CRITICAL OR TRAUMATIC INCIDENT PROCEDURES

Any employee whose action(s) or use of force in an official capacity results in death or serious physical injury will be removed from a line of duty assignment, pending an administrative review and consultation with the Kalamazoo County Prosecutor. (3.3.4)

- A. Whenever possible, the involved officer will be immediately relieved from the scene and taken to a quiet area away from the scene.
- B. At the scene of the incident, a supervisor will handle the officer and all involved personnel in a manner that acknowledges the stress caused by the incident.
- C. The supervisor will take custody of the officer's duty weapon for laboratory analysis. A supervisor will take custody in a discreet manner and replace it with another weapon or advise the officer that it will be returned or replaced at a later time, as appropriate.
- D. The Chief or Deputy Chief will direct any employee whose action(s) or use of force in an official capacity that results in the death or serious physical injury to be relieved from active duty with pay.

V. STRESS RECOGNITION TRAINING

- A. The following are examples of critical incidents and criteria that may indicate the need for a Critical Incident Debriefing (CID), but is not limited to the following:
 - 1. Duty death.
 - 2. Death or serious injury of a person who is the recipient of services by agency employees. Such a person may be a public safety employee, university employee, or a member of the public who is a recipient of said service.
 - 3. Suicide.
 - 4. Shooting situations.
 - 5. Multiple injury or casualty events.
 - 6. Prolonged rescue attempts, especially with negative results.
 - 7. Traumatic incidents involving children.
 - 8. Circumstances that result in staff members exhibiting numerous behavioral changes.
 - 9. Anxiety symptoms or unusually strong emotional responses, which are persistent or become more pronounced after one month, are potential indicators of the presence of PTSD.
- B. Supervisors will evaluate the above considerations and any other evident manifestations to determine if CID is warranted.
- C. All sworn personnel will receive stress recognition training.(2.1.6.d)

VI. PROCEDURE

- A. Any employee experiencing stress as a result of trauma from exposure to a critical incident should notify a supervisor and request a critical incident debriefing.
- B. Any supervisor observing an employee experiencing stress as a result of trauma from exposure to a critical incident should notify his or her immediate supervisor, who in turn will initiate CID as soon as practicable. (2.1.6.b)

- C. If necessary, the affected employee may be relieved from duty and placed on administrative leave after a traumatic critical incident at the discretion of the ranking on-scene supervisor. (2.1.6.a) (3.3.4)
- D. Neither psychological stress consultation nor administrative leave shall be interpreted in any manner that would give anyone the impression that some form of discipline is being imposed.
- E. Temporary assignment to administrative duties may be authorized at the discretion of the Chief or designee.
- F. Employees should feel relatively free to express thoughts, emotions, and experiences relative to the incident without fear of reprisal and/or disciplinary action.
- G. Confidentiality is a basic component of CID. The philosophy of confidentiality is of utmost importance and shall be followed. Confidentiality focuses on the wellbeing of the individual involved.

VII. REFERRAL SERVICES

- A. Referral to CID and/or counseling services will be requested through the Chief or designee. The request will set forth the circumstances of the incident as well as all symptoms manifested by staff members. (2.1.6.c)
- B. Whenever possible, counseling and debriefings should occur within 48 hours of the incident.
- C. After identifying the need for a debriefing and when possible, the Chief will arrange for the debriefing with a psychologist specifically trained with law enforcement trauma or concerns.
- D. As needed, follow-up action and additional counseling services are available for employees through the HelpNet. (2.1.6.c, 2.1.6.e)

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