



DEPARTMENTAL REGULATIONS  
CONCORD POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Chief of Police

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**CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**

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**A. POLICY STATEMENT**

The Concord Police Department recognizes that its employees are its greatest asset. Because we value our employees, we are dedicated to providing them with continued training and support in the area of stress management and career survival. Emergency services are perhaps the most demanding professions in our nation. The sheer nature of the job can take its toll on the men and women who have devoted their lives to protecting others. It is the goal of the Concord Police Department to keep the mental health of our employees as strong as it was when they first took their oath.

**B. GENERAL**

1. The purpose of the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) program is to provide all employees with the opportunity for peer assistance through times of personal or professional crisis.
2. The ultimate rationale for CISM is the realization that the distress and/or cumulative stress that we encounter throughout our emergency services career can negatively impact our lives. CISM is a comprehensive, organized approach for the reduction and control of harmful aspects of stress in emergency services.
3. The program is not to act as a replacement for professional mental health services, should they be deemed necessary.
4. The program includes, but is not limited to the following:
  - .1 Pre-incident and continued traumatic stress education
  - .2 Critical Incident Stress Management Team
  - .3 Peer Assistance Teams
  - .4 Professional counseling
  - .5 Demobilizations
  - .6 Defusings
  - .7 Debriefings
  - .8 Life Partner and family support services
  - .9 Specialty debriefings for citizen groups when necessary

- .10 On scene support services
- .11 Follow-up services after critical incident interventions
- .12 Chaplain Services
- .13 Other support services as required

## C. DEFINITIONS

1. **Critical Incident Stress Management Team:** A partnership between mental health professionals and emergency service employees who are interested in preventing and mitigating the negative impact of acute stress within the department and profession.
2. **Peer Assistance:** A process by which trained personnel provide emotional support, advice, and referrals for a colleague during a crisis or when they are under stress and/or abusing alcohol or other substances. Generally, peer assistance is sought by the employee in need, or suggested by the employee's peer(s). This type of assistance is voluntary.
3. **CISM Team member:** An employee trained to provide psychological first aid, support, and referrals to peer employees of the Concord Police Department.
4. **Mental Health Professional:** The department psychologist(s) who has experience, education, and training in the field of psychological services with special emphasis on police personnel.
5. **CISM Coordinator:** A Staff Officer or Sergeant appointed by the Chief of Police who acts as a liaison between CISM Team members, the Chief of Police, immediate staff, and mental health professionals.
6. **CISM Committee:** The board for the CISM program which is comprised of selected members of the CISM Team.
7. **CISD:** A group of meetings or discussions (debriefings, defusings, and demobilizations) about a traumatic event, or series of traumatic events. These meetings are designed to mitigate the psychological impact of a traumatic event, prevent the subsequent development of a post-traumatic syndrome, and serve as an early identification mechanism for individuals who will require professional mental health follow-up subsequent to a traumatic event.
8. **Debriefing:** A structured group meeting or discussion in which personnel are given the opportunity to discuss their thoughts and emotions about a distressing event in a controlled, structured, and rational manner. The debriefing is lead by a mental health professional or a CISM team member with advanced certification in CISM. CISM Team member(s) may also assist in the facilitation of the debriefing. It is a seven-phase process that should be conducted within 72 hours of the traumatic incident. The debriefing usually lasts 2 to 3 hours depending on the number of participants.
9. **Defusing:** A shortened version of the debriefing, generally lasting less than one hour. The defusing is conducted by the CISM Team member(s) only. It is a three-phase process that should take place as soon as possible after the traumatic event (within 8 hours). The defusing may be used to determine the need for a debriefing and/or other services.
10. **Demobilization** - Demobilization's are generally used during a disaster or in a large-scale catastrophic critical incident. A primary stress prevention and intervention technique, it is applied immediately after personnel are released from the scene and before they return to normal duties. Its two segments are, first, a 10- to 15- minute talk and, second, a 20 - minute rest and refueling session. The purpose is to provide an opportunity to 'decompress' before moving to the next assignment, provide practical

suggestions for stress management and offer an avenue to those experiencing critical incident stress effects to receive further assistance

#### **D. CISM PROGRAM STRUCTURE**

The roles and responsibilities of the:

##### **1. CISM Committee**

- .1 The CISM Committee will act as the policy and review board for the CISM program.
  - .01 Policies impacting the department will be approved by command staff.
- .2 The CISM Committee will be chosen by department personnel and, when possible, represent sworn and nonsworn personnel from each division.
  - .01 The CISM Coordinator and mental health professionals are members of the Committee.
- .3 It is not necessary for all CISM Team members to be Committee members.

##### **2. CISM Coordinator**

The CISM Coordinator shall be a Staff Officer or Sergeant with the responsibilities for management of the program as follows:

- .1 Chair the CISM Committee
- .2 Maintain and coordinate liaison between the mental health professional(s), CISM Team members, resource persons and the department.
- .3 Recruit and coordinate the screening of CISM Team applicants.
- .4 Create and maintain a list of qualified referral resources for the use of the CISM Team.
  - .01 Referral resources will be researched by the Coordinator and/or Committee prior to inclusion on a list to ensure the resource is an appropriate referral.
- .5 Records maintenance:
  - .01 Processing of budget requests including but not limited to contract services and training of department personnel.

##### **3. Department Supervisors and Managers**

- .1 Supervisors and managers will be educated in the CISM program so that they might better promote early intervention and resolution of critical incident stress.
- .2 Their responsibilities will be as follows:
  - .01 It is the responsibility of the supervisors and managers to identify employees who may be having problems as a result of distress acquired on or off duty. Once recognized, they should encourage the employee to make use of the CISM program, by obtaining peer assistance from the CISM Team member of their choice.

- .02 It is the responsibility of the supervisors and managers to ensure that they know when their employee(s) encounter one of the listed traumatic incidents (Section E.3) so that a critical incident stress defusing, debriefing, or demobilization can be initiated as soon as possible. (Refer to Section E.2 for initiation guidelines.)

#### 4. **CISM Team Members**

- .1 All CISM Team members must understand that being a member is voluntary and must be prepared to answer calls for help on a 24-hour basis.
  - .01 In most cases, peer assistance should take the form of an on duty meeting of a relatively short duration.
  - .02 Prolonged peer assistance, such as debriefings and defusings, should be scheduled on-duty whenever possible.
  - .03 In the event that extended off-duty overtime is required (more than two hours) the CISM Team member shall secure prior approval from the CISM Team Coordinator or his/her division commander or the command duty officer.
  - .04 CISM Team members will be compensated for their off-duty time in accordance with other Department and City policies and procedures.
- .2 CISM Team members shall keep a monthly tally of the number of contacts and hours involved in peer assistance if the CISM Coordinator or Committee needs this accounting for statistical purposes.
  - .01 The monthly tally shall be submitted to the CISM Coordinator by the tenth of the next month.
  - .02 Monthly reports are for statistical purposes only, with names of persons being assisted omitted.
- .3 CISM Team members will have input into the CISM program through representatives on the CISM Committee and through the CISM Coordinator.
- .4 CISM Team members should understand that the CISM program is a bifurcated one, which is comprised of Peer Assistance on the one side, and CISD on the other. In either case, Team members should be prepared to educate others on a wellness approach to reducing or defusing traumatic stress as well as sharing personal experiences. The CISM Team members should be prepared to react during crisis with interventions and referrals. When it comes to Peer Assistance, Team members need to seek out and initiate support early, but should avoid intruding. The Peer Assistance program should not be forced upon any unwilling person. However, when it comes to CISD, Team members should view the program as pro-active more than re-active. They should be prepared to give peer support during and after a traumatic incident, realizing that this phase of the program is mandatory for those members of the department who have been involved in a traumatic incident, even though participation is not.
- .5 CISM Team members shall respect and maintain the confidentiality of information and service provided, as well as the emotional needs of the person being assisted.
  - .01 One of the most important responsibilities of a CISM Team member is the promotion of trust, anonymity and confidentiality for employees who seek the assistance of the CISM program. Therefore, communications between a CISM Team member and an employee being assisted is considered privileged by the department unless criminal acts are involved;

where there is reason to believe that the person being assisted intends to seriously injure another person; or where the employee, through words or actions, manifests that there is a clear and present danger to him/herself, citizen(s), or fellow officers. In cases such as the preceding examples, the affected employee's division commander or the command duty officer shall be promptly notified. In the case of threatened serious injury, the intended victim shall also be warned. These exceptions to confidentiality are either required by law or because sworn members who become CISM Team members cannot abdicate their responsibilities as police employees in the process. If concerns arise, CISM Team members shall contact the CISM Coordinator.

- .02 CISM Team members have no legally protected privilege of patient confidentiality as far as court testimony. In questionable situations it might be best to converse with a department supervisor/ manager and only act as a companion officer.

## **E. PROCEDURES - USE OF CISM PROGRAM**

### **1. Requests for Peer Assistance**

Lists of the names of CISM Team members shall be posted on all bulletin boards and shall be provided to all supervisors and managers. Any police employee(s) in need of peer assistance may select a CISM Team member of his/her choice.

### **2. Initiation of a CISD**

- .1 In the event that one of the following critical incidents occurs, the supervisor of the employee should notify the CISM Coordinator or a CISM Team member as soon as possible. The Coordinator or Team member will then confer with the supervisor and assess whether or not the incident warrants the need for either a debriefing or defusing.
  - .01 When making the notification, the supervisor or manager should attempt to utilize an on-duty Team member in the absence of the Coordinator.
  - .02 In the unlikely event that the supervisor and the Team member disagree as to whether or not a debriefing or defusing is warranted, the CISM Coordinator will make the determination. In any event, when an employee requests intervention, that request will be granted.
  - .03 If it is determined that a defusing will be held, the on-duty Team member will be responsible for conducting the meeting, unless there is a conflict with that member and one or more of the members involved in the traumatic incident. In that case, another on-duty Team member should be utilized, or an off-duty member may be called in at the discretion of the CISM Coordinator.
- .2 Critical incidents to be considered:
  - .01 Line of duty deaths
  - .02 Serious line of duty injuries
  - .03 Suicide of a Concord Police Department employee
  - .04 Traumatic off-duty employee death
  - .05 Disaster/multi-casualty incidents

- .06 Police shootings
  - .07 Incidents resulting in death or serious injury to a citizen which is proximately caused by the police employee
  - .08 Significant events involving children
  - .09 When the victim of a serious crime is a known relative of the employee
  - .10 When the employee(s) must remain at a scene involving loss, for a prolonged period of time
  - .11 When there is excessive media interest and the employee(s) are displayed in a negative way
  - .12 Any significant event other than those listed above, where the supervisor or CISM Team member feels the employee(s) will benefit from a CISD.
- .3 This program is dependent upon the identification of all critical incidents large and small, to help reduce the emotional impact and to avoid the effects of posttraumatic stress.
- .4 The CISM debriefing or defusing should include any sworn and/or non-sworn police personnel directly involved in the incident. If the defusing or debriefing to be conducted is for an incident described in numbers 01 through 06 above, then attendance will be mandatory for those involved. However, if the defusing or debriefing to be conducted is for an incident described in numbers 07 through 011 above, then attendance is voluntary. In any event, active participation in the discussion is not a requirement. Anyone not directly involved in the incident, including the supervisor of the employee(s), may not attend the CISD.
- 01. If a one on one meeting involving the subject employee and the mental health professional is requested, that meeting should be conducted by the same mental health professional in charge of debriefing the incident.
  - 02. Any employee involved in an incident as described in numbers 01 through 06 above is not automatically mandated to receive a fitness for duty or a one on one evaluation.
- .5 CISM is not a substitute for a fitness for duty assessment by a clinical psychologist following a critical incident.
- .01 If a fitness for duty assessment is anticipated, and a debriefing is required, the CISM Coordinator will ensure that the mental health professional(s) utilized for the debriefing is not the same as the one(s) who will be conducting the fitness for duty assessment.

### 3. **Referrals to Mental Health Professionals**

CISM Team members are cautioned against referrals to the mental health professional without the CISM Coordinator's authorization. This is to avoid the professional having to donate his/her time when there is a means to pay for their services.

### 4. **Chaplain Services**

The Chaplain Services primary function is to provide encouragement and comfort without proselytizing to the City of Concord Department personnel, their families and the citizens of Concord. Chaplain services will also provide assistance with death notifications, funerals and special events or incidents as requested. Chaplain services will be provided on a volunteer basis and Chaplains will receive no payment or compensation for this service.

- .1 Duties
  - .01 Crisis response. Call out for employees and their families on duty and off duty upon request.
  - .02 Crisis intervention. Mediations and suicide prevention, traumatic crime scenes and locales for both employees and citizens.
  - .03 Death notifications. For citizens and as a department representative for employees as requested.
  - .04 Referral services to assist employees and families to a network of clergy of various faiths.
  - .05 Complete a monthly activity log and submit it to the CISM coordinator.
  - .06 Maintain their “privileged” communication status in all contacts in those they serve.
  - .07. Be available on a twenty-four hour, seven day a week basis to the Concord Police Department.
- .2 Selection
  - .01 The candidate shall be trained and licensed or fully ordained to serve as clergy within the State of California.
  - .02 Department personnel are excluded from this program.
  - .03 Criteria for Chaplain selection are intended to ensure program integrity. Particularized judgment will be used in the selection of applicants for this position.
- .3 Uniform
  - 01. Chaplains shall wear tan pants and a navy blue knit polo shirt or navy blue long sleeved cotton blend shirt. A blue jacket depicting the Concord Police badge on the left breast and the words “police chaplain” on the right may also be worn as the outermost garment.

**F. CISM TEAM MEMBER SELECTION CRITERIA**

- 1. For any sworn or non-sworn police employee who accepts nomination to the CISM team, the following criteria for selection shall be followed:
  - .1 Off probation
  - .2 Written endorsement of his/her supervisor
  - .3 Not the subject of an on-going disciplinary investigation. Past disciplinary actions will be considered as far as applicant suitability prior to appointment.
  - .4 Not suffering from any known serious personal problems or psychological stress.
  - .5 Interviewed, then recommended by a mental health professional, CISM Coordinator and/or CISM Committee after interest and suitability determined.
    - .01 Should any of the criteria above change to the detriment of the department or CISM Team member, the member will be released from active status in the program. The decision for

removal or inactive status will be determined by the CISM Coordinator and/or mental health professional.

## **G. CISM TRAINING**

### **1. Training Coordination**

The CISM Coordinator is responsible for determining the training needs of CISM Team members and the scheduling of initial and continuing training.

### **2. Initial Training**

.1 The initial training shall be a minimum of a P.O.S.T. approved Basic Peer Support school as well as a Basic CISM school. These courses shall be completed prior to the peer being utilized as a full-time CISM Team member. However, a member who has received the Basic Peer Support training may involve themselves with that aspect of the program. Likewise, a member who has received the Basic CISM training may involve themselves with that aspect of the program.

.2 Initial training is intended to provide a basic understanding of and skills in the following areas:

- .01 Developing rapport with person being assisted
- .02 Facilitating and supportive listening skills
- .03 Crisis intervention techniques
- .04 Relationship problems
- .05 Alcoholism
- .06 Depression and suicide
- .07 Post critical incident syndrome
- .08 Job related problems
- .09 Taking action (CISD)

### **3. Continued Training**

.1 Follow-up training for CISM Team members will be determined by the Committee and will be scheduled by the CISM Coordinator. Some areas to be considered are:

- .01 Problem solving workshops
- .02 Referral update information
- .03 Sharing workshops
- .04 Advanced skills workshops
- .05 Critical incident identification
- .06 Traumatic incident stress

.07 Post traumatic stress disorder

.08 Advanced CISD certification

.2 Continued training will be provided in house by the mental health professional(s) and/or by outside classes in appropriate subjects.