

WINONA POLICE DEPARTMENT

NUMBER: 109-16 PAGES: 3

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 27, 2004

SUBJECT: CRITICAL INCIDENTS – DEPARTMENT RESPONSE

1.0 Policy: The Winona Police Department recognizes that employees involved in critical incidents may be subject to stress reactions both during and post incident. Knowing that these stress reactions may have a corrosive effect on the employee, potentially leading to long-term professional or personal problems, the policy of the Department will be to provide immediate follow-up care to involved employees as the Department deems necessary.

2.0 Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to clearly establish for department personnel:

- 2.1 events which are critical incidents,
- 2.2 reporting responsibilities for supervisors,
- 2.3 command level response to critical incidents, and
- 2.4 involved employee responsibilities.

3.0 Definitions:

3.1 Administrative Leave: Paid leave granted to an employee that does not affect or reduce the employee's annual/vacation or sick leave balance.

3.2 Critical Incident:

- 3.2.1 An incident in which deadly force, as defined in MS. 609.066, Subd.1, is used by an officer.
- 3.2.2 An incident resulting in death, great bodily harm, or substantial bodily harm to an employee of the Winona Police Department or to a member or members of the public.
- 3.2.3 Particularly gruesome suicides or homicides, brutal child abuse cases, or several difficult incidents occurring within a short time frame.
- 3.2.4 A life-threatening event or an employee involved with a life-or-death struggle with another.
- 3.2.5 Additional examples of critical incidents may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. hostage situations,
 - b. pursuits,
 - c. sudden death or serious injury to a child,
 - d. difficult rescue efforts,
 - e. a victim and family known by the responder,
 - f. a victim with overwhelming traumatic injuries,
 - g. natural disasters or mass casualty incidents, or
 - h. significant unfavorable media coverage of an event.

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- 3.3 Critical Incident Stress Debriefing: A critical incident stress debriefing is a formal group discussion provided 24-72 hours after an incident. It is a psychological and educational procedure conducted to lessen the impact of a critical incident and accelerate normal recovery, in normal people, having normal reactions to abnormal events. Information acquired by peer group members in a public safety peer counseling debriefing is private data.
- 3.4 Critical Incident Defusing: An informal process which takes place immediately post critical incident. It involves employees, supervisors, and a representative of the Critical Incident Stress Management Team. This process focuses on immediate reaction and education of those involved in a critical incident.
- 3.5 Critical Incident Stress Management Team (CISM): A team of trained volunteers that respond to assist with peer support, crisis intervention and critical incident stress management in the metropolitan area. The CISM Team conducts defusings, debriefings, demobilizations and on-site stress management.
- 3.6 Involved Employee: An employee of the Winona Police Department, or Department support personnel who are directly or indirectly involved in a critical incident. This includes but is not limited to: police officers, reserve officers, clerical staff, student aides and interns.

4.0 Reporting and Responsibilities

- 4.1 The duty sergeant shall determine if an event is a critical incident as defined by this policy. Through knowledge of the incident and observation of and discussion with involved employees, the on-duty sergeant will assess whether or not involved employees will be granted immediate leave from the work place or continue their respective shifts.
- 4.2 Occurrences determined to be critical incidents are to be reported immediately to the Chief of Police and/or Deputy Chief by the on-duty sergeant.
- 4.3 The on-duty sergeant shall prepare written documentation of the incident and immediate supervisory actions prior to completion of the work shift.
- 4.4 The Chief of Police or designee may grant employees demonstrating an emotional reaction to the incident administrative leave up to three working days in length.
- 4.5 The Chief of Police may extend administrative leave for up to two weeks in duration. Employees seeking administrative leave beyond three days must be engaged in a treatment or counseling program intended to alleviate the effects of the critical incident upon the employee.

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- 4.6** The Chief of Police or Deputy Chief may order an immediate Critical Incident Defusing. Additionally, the Chief or Deputy Chief may order a Critical Incident Debriefing. This debriefing may be arranged through the CISM Team. All such debriefings shall occur as soon as possible but no later than 72 hours after the incident. The Chief of Police retains the authority to require attendance by employees involved in a critical incident. Employees required or electing to attend Defusings or Critical Incident Stress Debriefings shall be compensated per contract language.
- 5.0** Post-traumatic Stress Syndrome Benefit: Minnesota State Statute 299A.411 requires law enforcement agencies to provide certain benefits to officers who have been clinically diagnosed as suffering from Post-traumatic Stress Syndrome as a result of the lawful taking of a life and are unable to perform other peace officer job duties provided by the employer. Officers involved in incidents covered by this legislation will be afforded the benefits as required by State Statute.
- 6.0** Return to Work: Employees placed on leave following involvement in a critical incident may be required to meet with an experienced psychologist or mental health professional to assure that the employee is prepared for return to work.