

OG 200.6 CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT

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PURPOSE

To identify if personnel are in need of critical incident stress management (CISM)

DEFINITIONS OF A CRITICAL INCIDENT

- A. Any Situation faced by emergency service personnel that causes them to experience unusually strong emotional reactions which have the potential to interfere with their ability to function either at the scene or later.
- B. A life experience or series of experiences that so seriously upsets the balance of the individual that it creates changes in the person's emotional, cognitive or behavioral functioning.

PROCEDURE

- A. When emergency responders are faced with a situation that may be a critical incident it is important to observe the individual reactions of responders and possibly bystanders to determine if they are reacting to a critical incident. A situation that seems like a critical incident will have a wide effect on responders it is their reaction to the incident not the incident itself that determines if and what type of CISM is used. This may not show up for days or weeks but is normally apparent soon after a possible critical incident has occurred.
- B. It is important to consider that even a scene that does not appear to be a serious situation can still be a critical incident to a responder(s) because of personal or work-related life experiences. This can then become a CISM issue for the affected responder(s) just the same as a major scene.
- C. Personnel should have annual in-service training in CISM management from a peer if possible.
 1. If a responder needs CISM then the chief or designee should if possible contact a local responder trained in peer CISM intervention. It may be beneficial to have an individual on scene and then "back at the station" after the call to assist in observing responders individual reactions for the need of CISM.
 2. CISM can be accomplished as "one on one" or in a group. This is determined on how many responders are showing signs of a critical incident and the need for CISM.
- D. The CISM Team may be activated by contacting the Duty Officer.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- The CISM Team may be activated any time it is felt that personnel (including them) are being affected by critical incident stress.
- The CISM Team will determine the type of response necessary (i.e., Crisis Management Briefing (CMB), One-to-One Intervention, Demobilization, Defusing, or Formal Debriefing (CISD)).