

BLOOMINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

POST CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

Reviewed by: Asst. Chief Timothy McCoy	Effective Date: February 19, 1997
Authorized by: Chief Daniel Donath	Revision Date: November 27, 2019

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to guide the Bloomington Police Department in providing proper emotional support to employees who have been affected by a traumatic critical incident or who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. The Bloomington Police Department is concerned about the emotional wellness of its employees. A healthy emotional attitude is critical to the effective accomplishment of the Department's goals and mission.

POLICY

The policy of the Bloomington Police Department is to provide liaison assistance to Department employees who experience a traumatic critical incident or who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. The Department will strive to provide support to affected employees who are exposed to a traumatic critical incident or show symptoms of post-traumatic stress.

DEFINITIONS

Critical Incident - An incident which results in serious injury or death of other persons connected with the incident, wherein a Department employee is directly or indirectly involved.

The following are recognized critical incidents:

1. Line of duty death;
2. Serious line of duty injury;
3. Department employee suicide;
4. Multi-casualty incident;
5. Officer's use of deadly force or having to shoot at a person;
6. Significant event involving children;
7. Hostage situation.

The following should be considered on a case by case basis to determine whether they are critical incidents:

1. Failed mission;
2. Victim is a relative or well-known to responders or employee;
3. Bomb threat;
4. Excessive media interest/attention on the crime or officer(s);
5. Shift or officer hit by repetitive "horrible" events;
6. Shift or officer exposed to multiple critical incidents within a relatively brief time period;

7. Sexual assaults or other horrible victimizations;
8. Other stressing events

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder - An anxiety disorder which can result from exposure to short-term severe stress, or the long-term build up of repetitive and prolonged stress.

PROCEDURE

The policy of the Bloomington Police Department is to provide support to employees and/or their families who are exposed to a traumatic critical incident or show symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress. The appropriate guidelines for responding to such incidents are provided below:

1. The commanding officer present at the critical incident scene shall ensure that the Chief of Police is notified of the incident and report the behavior displayed by the involved employees. Every Department employee is responsible for reporting to the staff officer behavior they believe may be consistent with post-traumatic stress disorder. Staff officers are mandated to notify the Chief of Police as soon as possible of all such reports.
2. The commanding officer at the scene should arrange for first responding employee(s) who are no longer required/needed at the scene to leave the scene as soon as possible. The employee(s) should be taken to a quiet secure setting. A supportive friend should remain with the employee(s). The Chief of Police shall ensure that employee(s) are given an explanation of the anticipated events to follow, (i.e., "defusing") before releasing the employee to return to duty or to go home.
3. Employee(s) involved in the critical incident or showing symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder may be given administrative leave for a reasonable time period determined by the Chief of Police. During the administrative leave, the employee(s) shall remain available for any pending defusing or debriefings, fitness for duty evaluations, or investigations.
4. The Chief of Police shall order any Department employee(s) who has been involved in a critical incident or who is showing symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder to attend a defusing/debriefing, which may include a fitness for duty evaluation. The defusing/debriefing and fitness for duty evaluation shall be conducted by a professional psychological service chosen by the Chief of Police at no expense to the employee.
5. When a Department employee is seriously injured or killed, the Department shall extend support to the employee's family by immediately appointing a "Family Liaison Officer".

FAMILY LIAISON OFFICER

The selection of a Family Liaison Officer is a critical assignment that should only be given to officers who want to perform this assignment. The Family Liaison Officer should not have any other conflicting duties during this temporary but critical assignment. The Family Liaison Officer is responsible for the following:

1. Ensuring that the needs of the family come before the wishes of the department;
2. Notifying the family, if this has not already been done;
3. Accompanying the family to the hospital, morgue, funeral or the other places as needed;
4. Arranging for transportation needs;
5. Assisting the family with funeral arrangements, including food, travel and lodging for out of town family;
6. Apprising the family of information concerning the death and the investigation of the death;
7. Arranging for the delivery of the officer's/employee's personal belongings to the family;
8. Assisting the family with death benefit claims and/or expenses;
9. Keeping the Chief of Police apprised of the funeral arrangements and other matters concerning the family;

10. "Protecting" the family from overly intrusive media.