



# SACRAMENTO POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDERS



## 570.03 POST-TRAUMA RESPONSE 07-17-2023

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this order is to provide guidelines for post-trauma response and peer support for employees experiencing a traumatic incident.

### POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Sacramento Police Department to place the highest priority on the general well-being of department employees affected by traumatic incidents.

### PROCEDURE

#### A. DEFINITION

1. **TRAUMATIC INCIDENT** - Any event or situation that is likely to be emotionally overwhelming to a department employee.

#### B. EMPLOYEE INVOLVED TRAUMATIC INCIDENT

1. To reduce the likelihood of serious post-trauma stress reaction the following procedures shall be followed:
  - a. If the incident is of such a nature that trauma can be expected, or when requested by the employee, either the employee's division commander, incident commander, a supervisor, or their designee, shall:
    - (1) Notify Employee Services Unit (ESU) or a designated peer support member to respond to the employee's location for post-trauma assistance and peer support.
    - (2) Notify a chaplain, as needed, to respond for assistance.
  - b. The affected employee may contact a department peer support member if one is desired either through ESU or directly from the list maintained in the Versadex notepad. The list is also available through the Sacramento Police Officers Association.
    - (1) If the selected peer support member cannot be contacted, the involved employee may select another person from the list until a peer support member is contacted and will respond.
    - (2) Employees may talk to a peer support member, chaplain, private physician, or clinician without notifying a supervisor.
  - c. If the affected employee has caused serious injury or death to another, the peer support member shall not discuss the incident and may refer the involved employee to additional professional services.
2. Peer support members or chaplains shall provide emotional support by:
  - a. Diffusing any traumatic reaction or excessive anxiety the employee may be experiencing.
  - b. Providing information regarding possible reactions the employee or their family may experience.
  - c. Suggesting resources and referrals the employee or family members may require.
  - d. Advising the employee and their family members, if appropriate, of department policies, procedures, and other pertinent information. Make the employee aware of what action and events to expect due to the incident.
3. The division commander or designee shall:
  - a. Notify ESU who will contact the employee or family within three days, or as necessary, after the incident to assist with any problems or concerns needing resolution. Should ESU determine that a referral to professional clinical services would be of benefit, they will assist the employee with coordinating and scheduling any appointments.
  - b. Any visit with a clinician is confidential.



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- (1) If the clinician determines that the employee is experiencing complications which may result in a danger to the employee, the clinician will follow their licensure guidelines to assist the employee with further mental health assistance. This includes a written safety plan and contact with the employee's family if agreed upon. If the above items do not address the intent, means, and plan; the clinician must call 911 and have law enforcement respond or transport the patient to the emergency room.
  - (2) If SPD or ESU is officially notified that the employee has become a danger to themselves, danger to others, or gravely disabled the notification shall be routed through the Personnel Services Division (PSD) captain or the employee's division commander. The PSD captain shall notify the involved employee's supervisor, through the chain of command, if the employee has been cleared for duty.
4. The ESU will provide support to the employee and their family, to include counseling, trauma treatment, or other resources deemed necessary and agreed upon by the employee and ESU.

### C. CRITICAL INCIDENT LEAVE

1. If an employee discharges their firearm at a person, causes any death, or serious injury likely to result in death, the employee's deputy chief shall place the employee on critical incident leave. If the employee is involved in serious traumatic incident not described here, the employee's deputy chief may approve critical incident leave, in all or in part:
  - a. Critical Incident Leave (CIL) lasts 14 calendar days after an incident and consists of the following:
    - (1) The employee shall be placed off work for seven calendar days starting the day after the incident.
    - (2) The employee shall be requested to participate in an interview after the event and up to two sleep cycles with approval of the Office of Investigations captain or designee depending on the nature of the incident.
    - (3) The employee shall coordinate with the ESU for an appointment with a psychologist, within the initial seven calendar days after the critical incident.
    - (4) With approval from their division commander, the employee may return to duty in a modified capacity for the second calendar week of CIL.
      - (a) The employee's division commander shall determine the employee's assignment while on modified duty.
    - (5) While on modified duty, the employee should not be assigned to a uniformed assignment, nor should they have contact with members of the public in their official capacity.
      - (a) If an employee requests or requires additional time off, their division commander, or designee, shall confer with the employee to consider an appropriate course of action.
      - (b) While on CIL, the employee shall use the time reporting code CIL. If the employee returns to modified duty, they shall use REG.
  - b. Prior to returning to regular duty, the involved employee shall meet with their division commander, or designee, for a post-incident assessment.
    - (1) The division commander, or designee, shall determine the employee's readiness to return to duty and explore available options to the employee.
      - (a) The division commander shall notify the PSD of the employee's duty status.
      - (b) When the employee returns to full duty, the division commander shall notify the PSD of the date of return to full duty.
      - (c) If the employee is determined not ready to return to full duty after working within their division for a week, the employee shall be reassigned to a long-term modified duty assignment by the PSD captain.
  - c. Nothing in this order prevents the department from placing an employee on administrative leave at any time.



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## D. OTHER TRAUMATIC INCIDENTS

1. In any case where employees may suffer post-trauma stress, the employees should meet with their division commander, or designee, to determine the need for post-trauma debriefing or other follow-up procedures.
2. The division commander, or designee, shall evaluate the circumstances of each incident, on an individual basis, and the effects on the involved employee. The division commander, or designee, may recommend implementation of any or all the procedures outlined in this order, or any other process such as peer support, police chaplaincy, etc.