

Procedure

10.6

EFFECTIVE
DATE
3-15-19

Eugene Police Department



Post-Critical Incident Procedures

10.6.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines which will be uniformly applied following any employee-involved critical incident in order to assist employees in managing potential emotional distress, and help minimize the chances that personnel involved will develop or suffer from symptoms of emotional distress related to critical incidents.

For critical incidents where deadly force was involved, please also refer to *Policy 810 – Use of Deadly Force Investigations*.

10.6.2 DEFINITIONS

Employee-involved critical incident: A line-of-duty incident in which an employee is involved that produces unusually strong reactions having the potential to interfere with the employee's ability to function either at the scene or later. Examples of situations which might affect an employee in this way include death of another employee, serious injury to self or another employee, officer-involved use of deadly force, situations involving death or serious injury to a child, and mass-casualty incidents.

10.6.3 GENERAL PROCEDURES

- a. Employees involved in an incident who feel it is affecting their ability to do their job properly, should notify their supervisor.
- b. Employees should remember that discussions with other employees generally have no confidentiality privilege. Therefore, details of incidents where confidentiality may be an issue should not be discussed except with department investigators or supervisors, and/or with persons with whom such conversations are privileged. (Peer counselors have some privilege under provisions of *ORS 181.860*. Refer to *Procedure 11.23 – Peer Support and Resiliency Team (PSRT)* for information.
- c. Employees may seek confidential help through the City's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or may wish to contact other mental health professionals.

10.6.4 CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS DEBRIEF

- a. After a critical incident, a Critical Incident Stress Debrief for employees involved in the incident may be held.

- b. This debrief will be directed by the Eugene Police Peer Support and Resiliency Team, (and will generally be conducted 24-72 hours after the incident. Multiple debriefings may occur if large numbers of employees were involved in the incident.
- c. This type of debriefing differs from an operational debriefing in that the critical incident stress debrief is designed to help employees deal with their personal reactions to the incident. Employee participation, while encouraged, is voluntary.
- d. The critical incident stress debrief is conducted by the PSRT with a mental health professional present with the understanding that what is said is confidential among the participants. Legal privilege exists between each employee present and the mental health professional, but generally not between employees only. If confidentiality is a significant concern in a particular incident, there may be specific legal protections in a one-on-one setting with a mental health professional.

10.6.5 RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SUPERVISORS

- a. Procedures at the scene
 - 1. Make arrangements for any needed medical care. Secure the employee's equipment, if the employee is unable to do so.
 - 2. Meet briefly with the involved employee and assess what needs to be done. Consider taking the following actions, if appropriate to the situation:
 - a. Arrange to get the employee away from the scene and taken to a quiet, secure area.
 - b. Assign a support person to the employee, with a reminder to each that any conversation about the incident is not legally privileged. This support person will remain with the involved employee, providing for their welfare and safety until relieved by a PSRT member.
 - c. Notify the PSRT supervisor who will assign a PSRT member to assist the involved employee and to give the employee initial information about what to expect as a result of experiencing a traumatic incident. The employee may select an additional support person, but should be reminded that there is no confidentiality regarding statements made to any department member who is not a designated peer counselor.
 - d. If the Eugene Police Employees Association (EPEA) is involved, the PSRT member will respect any request by the EPEA representative or an attorney representing the EPEA or the involved employee to have a private conversation with the involved employee.
 - e. Assign someone to drive the employee, rather than requiring the employee to drive.
 - f. Allow the employee to notify their family as soon as possible. If this is not possible, have someone from the department make the notification

and offer transportation to the employee's location.

3. If appropriate, once the employee has completed necessary tasks and talked with investigators, the employee may be released from duty for the balance of their watch. (If there is a major case investigation under way, also obtain authorization from the Investigations supervisor.) Assist the employee with any needed paperwork.
4. Do not release involved employees' names to the media until their families have been notified.
5. Ensure that the sector/watch commander and affected division commander are notified, as well as any other notifications needed (e.g., employee assistance provider if appropriate.)
6. If requested by the involved employee, the PSRT member assisting the employee will be allowed to remain with (or available to) the employee after the incident for whatever period of time is deemed appropriate by the involved employee, the PSRT member, and the department.
7. The PSRT member assisting the involved employee will keep the PSRT supervisor apprised of the employee's status and progress. The PSRT supervisor serves as a liaison between the involved employee and management but, due to confidentiality concerns, will only share information related to any needs the employee may have and the employee's availability for work.

b. After the incident

1. Supervisors may, with the concurrence of their division commander or designee, assign the employee to modified duty or to administrative leave. If an employee is placed on administrative leave or modified duty assignment, the employee must receive a release to return to normal duty. This release may be from a mental health professional working with the employee, if that professional has experience in dealing with traumatic incidents. The City reserves the right to require a release from the department psychologist.
2. Supervisors should ensure that the employee and the employee's family are aware of services available from the City's employee assistance provider and other resources (e.g., Eugene Police Benevolence Association, (EPBA.)
3. Upon request of an employee, or if a need is identified by the supervisor, a supervisor may authorize paid administrative leave to the affected employee up to 36 hours following their involvement in a traumatic incident (remainder of involved shift and following work day.) At this time, the supervisor should inform the employee of resources available to them, including but not limited to, PSRT and the City's Employee Assistance Program.
4. After the 36-hour window, if the employee still does not feel capable of returning to work, the employee will be required to use time from their personal leave accruals.

5. Employees may file an 801 form and seek treatment through the Workers' Compensation Program. Should they take this step, leave will be provided in accordance with the appropriate statutes and the City's wage continuation benefit.
6. Depending on the nature of the incident and the number of employees involved, the supervisor should facilitate group and/or one-on-one critical incident debriefs for employees as soon as feasible following an incident. Supervisors may handle these informal debriefs on their own or with the assistance of PSRT representatives, depending on the needs of the involved employees. The primary purpose of the supervisor's critical incident debrief is to check on an employee's well-being, allow for employees to decompress, and for supervisors to provide PSRT and the EAP resources, if appropriate. When necessary, formal Critical Incident Stress Debriefs will be conducted by PSRT representatives.
7. Supervisors should monitor the employee's work behavior for signs of emotional distress related to the traumatic incident which may occur later.
8. While on administrative leave, an employee will ensure that the PSRT contact person is aware of the employee's whereabouts, or how the employee may be contacted so that necessary information can be exchanged.
9. Communications related to the employee's duty status, return to work, or other administrative concerns will be coordinated through the PSRT supervisor and the involved employee's supervisor.
10. When a necessity exists to do so, an employee involved in a traumatic incident, or a PSRT member acting on their behalf, may go directly to the involved employee's division manager with an issue or problem related to the incident.
11. The PSRT member directly assisting the involved employee will be permitted to adjust their shift assignment as needed, with approval of their supervisor and the PSRT supervisor.

**Chris Skinner
Chief of Police**