

## CHAPTER Y

### Critical Incidents: Department Response

#### **24.01 Purpose**

The purpose of this directive is to clearly establish for agency personnel:

Events which are critical incidents.

Reporting responsibilities for supervisors.

Command level response to critical incidents.

Involved employee responsibilities.

#### **24.02 Policy**

The Belgrade/Brooten 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 and personal problems, the policy of the Police Department will be to provide immediate follow up care to involved employees as the Department deems necessary

#### **24.03 Scope**

This section shall be applicable to employees involved in critical incidents directly and may extend to employees with indirect involvement. This policy applies to incidents that occur while the employee is on-duty, or acting within their capacity as an employee of the Belgrade/Brooten Police Department.

#### **Definitions**

- A. Administrative leave:  
Paid leave granted to an employee that does not affect or reduce the employee's annual vacation/holiday/comp. or sick leave balance.
  
- B. Critical incident:
  - 1. An incident which deadly force, as defined in MS. 609.066, Subdivision 1, is used by an officer.
  - 2. An incident resulting in death, great bodily harm, or substantial bodily harm to an employee of the Belgrade Police Department or to a member or members of the

- public.
3. Particularly gruesome suicides or homicides, brutal child abuse cases, or several difficult incidents occurring within a short time frame.
  4. A life-threatening event or an employee involved with a life or death struggle with another.
  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.

C. 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.

D. Critical Incident Diffusing:

An informal process which takes place immediately post critical incident. It involves employees, supervisors, and a representative of the Critical Incident Management Team. This process focuses immediate reaction and education of those involved in a critical incident. Team members may distribute material to those involved.

E. 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. The CISM Team conducts defusing, debriefings, demobilizations and on-site stress management.

F. Immediate Family Members:

The employee's spouse, child or stepchild.

G. Involved Employee:

An employee of the Belgrade/Broten 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, Communications Personnel, Community Services Officers, Records/Clerical Staff, Police Reserves, Chaplains and Police Student Interns.

**24.04 Reporting and Responsibilities**

A. The supervisor on duty or if not available, Officer In Charge (OIC) shall determine if an event is a critical incident as defined by this policy. Through knowledge of the incident, observation of and discussion with involved employees, the on-duty supervisor or if not available, the OIC will assess whether or not involved employees will be granted immediate leave from the workplace, or continue their respective shifts. Occurrences determined to be critical incidents are to be reported immediately to the Chief of Police, Deputy Police Chief and Lieutenant, by the on-duty supervisor, or if not available, the OIC.

B. 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, not including the day of the critical incident.

C. The Chief of Police may extend administrative leave for up to two weeks in duration. Employees seeking administrative leave beyond three days, not including the day of the critical incident, must be engaged in a treatment or counseling program intended to alleviate the effects of the critical incident upon the employee.

**24.05 On Duty Supervisor or Officer in Charge Documentation**

In addition to immediate notification of the Chief of Police. The on-duty supervisor or OIC shall prepare written documentation of the incident and immediate supervisory actions prior to completion of the work shift. This report may be narrative supplemental report or, in the absence of a narrative, a memorandum to the Chief.

#### **24.06 Chief Responsibilities**

The Chief of Police or Acting Police Chief may order an immediate Critical Incident Diffusing. Additionally, the Chief or Acting Chief Police 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 Diffusing or Critical Incident Stress Debriefings shall be compensated per contract language or personnel policy as appropriate.

#### **24.07 Extending Services to Family**

Critical Incidents not only affect the employee, but immediate family members as well. If requested, and at the Chief's discretion, the Police Department may assist with arranging professional counseling and follow up care by an experienced psychologist or mental health professional for immediate family members affected by the aftermath of the incident with the department covering the costs.

#### **24.08 Posttraumatic 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 Posttraumatic Stress Syndrome as a result of the lawful taking of a life and are unable to perform other peace officer job duties by the employer.

Officers involved in incidents covered by this legislation will be afforded the benefits as required by State Statute.

#### **24.09 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 to return to work.

This order is effective as of November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Revised 12/27/21

Casey Jansky Chief of Police