



## **Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)**

<http://www.indy.gov/eGov/City/DPS/IFD/CISM/Pages/home.aspx>

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The CISM Team utilizes a multi-dimensional approach. A proactive approach as well as supportive services and referrals are used to assist individuals in coping more effectively with stress. The program educates members of this department about critical incident stress and stress management techniques, thereby reducing the development of psychological stress disorders. The program has CISM team members available during a critical incident in order to provide emotional support and professional referrals for those impacted by events.

Case studies of major incidents, where numerous injuries or fatalities occurred, have revealed that a significant number of rescue personnel experience some form of stress, however, most personnel have no long-term detrimental effects. These studies have also revealed that a small percentage of personnel do experience continuing, long-term detrimental effects resulting from exposure to such incidents. Some of these effects have been delayed, surfacing later after a period of no apparent symptoms. Numerous studies have identified the emotional, physiological, and financial impact that untreated stressors can have on employees, the department and members of the employee's immediate family. Without intervention, personnel experiencing these long term effects show declining work performance, deterioration in family relationships, and increased health problems. The objective of this program is to provide intervention after major incidents to minimize stress-related injuries to IFD personnel.

### **ACTIVATION PROCEDURES:**

**Any personnel** may contact the CISM Team Coordinator(s) for a one-on-one meeting for him/herself or for any other individual at any time.

The CISM Team Coordinator(s) can be contacted directly using any of the numbers on the list or through MECA and asking the dispatcher to page the CISM Team Coordinator(s). However, it is not necessary to go through communications or the chain-of-command.

IFD Officers and supervisors are responsible for identifying/recognizing significant incidents that may qualify for debriefing. A significant incident may include any incident where the probability is high for a negative stress reaction to the incident by one or more members. When an incident is identified, a request for debriefing consideration should be made through the CISM Team

Coordinator as soon as possible. The coordinators may be contacting using numbers on the list or through MECA.

Any officer may initiate the debriefing process by contacting the Incident Commander at the scene. The Incident Commander will contact the coordinators through the numbers on the list or through MECA.

Any member who believes a need for an individual, confidential session may initiate the process by contacting Life Services EAP.

## **OPERATIONAL AUTHORITY**

Once the CISM Team is activated, the incident will be evaluated for the amount of intervention required. The specific debriefing services utilized will depend greatly upon the nature of the incident.

The Coordinator(s), in conjunction with the Mental Health Professional, will determine the appropriate response and will be responsible for activating the appropriate number of team members to mitigate the incident.

Responding team members will report directly to the CISM Team Coordinator(s) for assignment, unless initially assigned elsewhere. The Team Coordinator(s), or designee, will be directly responsible to the Incident Commander.

## **Team Member Responsibilities:**

The team will be responsible for defusings and formal critical incident stress debriefings during and after critical and other incidents as defined in this manual. One on one interventions, demobilizations

and after care follow-ups are all team member responsibilities. The primary team function is providing support services to career and civilian employees of IFD.



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