

# Queen Anne's County Department of Emergency Services

## Departmental Standard Operational Guidelines



**Subject:** Critical Incident Stress Management

**Section:** 701 Health and Wellness

### **I. Problem Statement**

- A. The nature of our profession routinely exposes emergency services personnel to stressful events. These stressors often manifest themselves in physical and/or psychological symptoms, which an individual may or may not be able to process on their own. In some cases, the emotional reaction and/or physical reaction may interfere with the ability of the individual to function in the work capacity or later in their personal life.
- B. Factors that cause stress for one individual may not cause stress for another. How an individual is affected by stress depends on the nature of the stressor as well as the individual's personal attributes. Research has shown that the majority of those whom demonstrate symptoms related to stress could not resolve these issues on their own.
- C. A critical incident is described as any event that would cause an individual to go into a state of psychological crisis. This event overwhelms the capacity of a person to psychologically cope with the incident, setting the stage for a crisis response. The emergency service worker is faced almost daily with certain events that have the potential to set the stage for a crisis response.
- D. Public and personal expectations of emergency service workers are high. Emergency service workers seem to perform their duties efficiently, calmly and devoid of outward human emotion, adding to their stress levels by failing to recognize and process stress inherent to their profession. In the emergency services profession, seeking and/or admitting the need for mental health support is often viewed as a sign of weakness.
- E. Emergency service workers need specialized support groups to deal with job-related stressors. They respond favorably to support services from peers specific to their vocation, with emphasis placed on pre-

incident education and mental preparedness training rather than psychotherapy.

## **II. Mission**

- A. The Queen Anne's County Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Team consists of a multi-component stress management service. This service is for individuals, both career and volunteer, committed to providing emergency response for the citizens and visitors of Queen Anne's County, as well as surrounding counties. The function of the CISM Team is to provide immediate crisis intervention for these personnel, utilizing the CISM process.
- B. The function of the CISM Team is not to provide or replace on-going professional counseling or psychotherapy, but to establish a non-threatening environment of peer and departmental support. The highest priority of the CISM Team is to provide emergency service personnel with a tool to potentially alleviate stress-related symptoms so that harmful effects of job-related stress may be mitigated.
- C. The goal of the QAC CISM Team is to reduce the risk of cumulative, traumatic and/or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). By mitigating the impact of a particular event and accelerating the recovery process, the risk of developing PTSD and/or cumulative stress decreases. The key to the intervention process is to facilitate discussion, in a peer-based environment, either in a group or on a one-on-one basis. Statistics show that discussion causes a reduction of cognitive, emotional and physiological symptoms experienced after a critical incident.
- D. The program will consist of the following components:
  - i. A CISM Team will be established to lessen the impact of a critical incident on emergency services personnel. The team will provide individual and/or group support to emergency service personnel, at the scene and/or after an encounter with a critical incident.
  - ii. Education and prevention programs will be provided. Programs and presentations on various related topics will be delivered annually to the emergency service organizations.
  - iii. A resources and referral network will be established to assist those emergency services providers seeking specialty services. This will include but not be limited to:

1. Substance abuse organizations.
2. Individual counseling.
3. Provisions of information.
4. Assistance to family members where appropriate.

### **III. The Critical Incident**

- A. Critical incidents are typically sudden, powerful events outside of the range of ordinary human experiences. Because they are so sudden and unusual, critical incidents can have a strong emotional involvement even on well-trained and experienced personnel.
- B. The following are examples of incidents that a "Critical Incident Stress Intervention" is recommended:
  - i. Serious injury or death of a co-worker, law enforcement, EMS worker, dispatcher, firefighter, or any other personnel involved in the incident.
  - ii. Mass casualty/disaster incidents involving serious injury or death.
  - iii. Suicide of a co-worker.
  - iv. Serious injury or death of a civilian as the result of an Emergency Service Provider.
  - v. Significant events involving a child.
  - vi. Loss of life or negative outcome of a patient following extraordinary and prolonged expenditure of physical and emotional energy during rescue efforts by providers, especially if unsuccessful.
  - vii. Incidents that attract extremely unusual or critical news media coverage.
  - viii. Any incident in which the circumstances were so unusual or the sights and sounds so distressing as to produce a high level of immediate or delayed emotional reaction.
  - ix. Any incident that is charged with profound emotion.

- x. Multiple significant incidents in a short time span.
- xi. Victim and/or family known by emergency services personnel.
- xii. Actual or perceived threat of physical/emotional well-being to an emergency services provider.
- xiii. A shooting involving Law Enforcement.
- xiv. Severe abuse.
- xv. Terrorism.

#### **IV. General Team Procedures**

- A. The team shall develop clearly stated policies and guidelines that address the following:
  - i. Team structure and organization.
  - ii. Team member responsibilities.
  - iii. Team membership criteria and selection.
  - iv. Revocation/suspension of membership.
  - v. Team access and deployment.
  - vi. Incident assessment.

#### **V. Team Structure**

- A. Team Structure and organization is essential to the operation of the team. The team will be broken down into the following categories and responsibilities:
  - i. Team Coordinator
    - 1. The Queen Anne's County Critical Incident Stress Management Team Coordinator will oversee and schedule all interventions, meetings, and inquiries. He/she will ensure that the team functions together.
    - 2. The Coordinator shall be trained in basic group interventions, advanced group interventions and Peer



support. The Coordinator will ensure that the team functions under the "Mitchell, or ICISF model".

3. The Coordinator is responsible to select the appropriate intervention and select a team from available and active members list
4. The Team Coordinator duties and responsibilities include but are not limited to the following:
  - (1). Develop and advise on standard operating guidelines and policies.
  - (2). Constitute a line of accountability for team members.
  - (3). Oversee adequate funding.
  - (4). Ensure adequate administrative support.
  - (5). Consider gripes and grievances related but not limited to members, interventions and programs.
  - (6). Develop field education and teach stress program to emergency personnel.
  - (7). Promote the peer support program.
  - (8). Develop a comprehensive and relevant support program for staff.
  - (9). Assist in the selection and application process of team members.
  - (10). Scheduling and approval of team member training.
  - (11). Organize team meetings.
  - (12). Serve as a representative to the public and organizations served by the Queen Anne's County CISM Team.
  - (13). Evaluate requests for debriefings, defusing, demobilization and stress management education.
  - (14). Dispatch the team.

- (15). Maintain team records.
  - (16). Maintain an active stance in the International CISM network.
  - (17). Perform other duties as necessary on behalf of the team.
  - (18). Participate in a peer review board to correct any team problems that may arise.
- 5. The Team Coordinator shall serve as long as he or she can willingly and freely provide the above service under the guidelines and policies of The Queen Anne's County CISM Team. The Team Coordinator may solicit support from other team members, when appropriate, to accomplish specific objectives.
  - 6. The Team Coordinator will be appointed by the EMS Division Chief.

ii. Team Members

- 1. CISM Team members are emergency responders, medical personnel, mental health professionals, and Chaplains who volunteer their time, energy and talents to "helping the helper" through the Queen Anne's County Critical Incident Stress Management Team.
- 2. The team member's duties and responsibilities include but are not limited to the following:
  - (1). Serve as a team member for CISM interventions assigned by the Team Coordinator.
  - (2). Initiate the first contact with those who are showing signs of distress after exposure to a critical incident.
  - (3). Contact the Team Coordinator to begin the set up process for the service of the CISM Team when appropriate.
  - (4). Provide peer support if properly trained to do so.
  - (5). Call for mental health assistance when required.

- (6). Assist in providing follow-up support.
  - (7). Remain informed of the CISM Team operating policies and procedures.
  - (8). Assist the team coordinator when needed.
  - (9). Function only within the limits of their training.
3. Team members shall serve as long as he or she can willingly and freely provide the above service under the guidelines and policies of The Queen Anne's County CISM Team. Team members may solicit support from the team Coordinator and other team members when appropriate to accomplish specific objectives.

## **VI. Team Membership Criteria and Selection**

A. New members will be solicited through application and screened according to the following criteria:

- i. Need for personnel or number of vacancies on the team.
- ii. Type of emergency service or specialty agency previously represented by any vacancy.
- iii. Current membership.
- iv. Availability of training funds/opportunity.
- v. Must successfully complete a minimum of ICISF approved Basic and Peer training courses to be active as a CISM provider.

B. The following is a list of criteria for selection of peer support personnel:

- i. Emergency Service Personnel.
- ii. Emotional maturity.
- iii. Respect of peers.
- iv. Ability to maintain confidentiality.
- v. Sensitive of the needs of others.
- vi. Willing to work as a team member.

- C. Approved clergy team members must provide pastoral care support according to the ICISF model of CISM. Furthermore, clergy team members must fulfill all job requirements stated within the Queen Anne's County job description of Pastoral Care Volunteer.
- D. Approved mental health team members must provide mental health support according to the ICISF model of CISM. Furthermore, mental health team members must fulfill all job requirements stated within the Queen Anne's County job description of Mental Health Volunteer.
- E. Approved team members are provided a photo I.D. to be utilized at ALL times, when conducting a CISM intervention. Photo I.D.'s must be returned at the termination of CISM Team membership.
- F. To maintain active status, CISM Team members must complete an application form and a Memorandum of Understanding. Pastoral and mental health team members must also meet criteria of Queen Anne's County's volunteer job description.
- G. Any member wishing to resign from the CISM Team for any reason should submit a written resignation.
- H. Any member who is in need of an extended period of absence should notify the CISM Team Coordinator. The member wishing to take a leave of absence from the CISM Team should submit a written request and discuss the matter with the Team Coordinator.
- I. Each CISM Team Member must attend at least 50% of CISM sponsored training/meetings per year to remain active and in good standing.
- J. It is the policy of the CISM Team to provide equal opportunity to all persons based on merit and qualifications, without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, sex, age, or handicap. This includes recruiting, training, promotion, compensation, benefits, and all other factors involved in the treatment of applicants, volunteers, and employees.
- K. It is the policy of CISM Team to provide its critical incident stress management services and educational programs upon request and without similar bias to all emergency service professionals and the organizations that represent them.
- L. The Selection Review Board will be made up of the CISM Team Coordinator and two other team members. The decision to select new

members to the CISM Team is ultimately decided upon by the Selection Review Board.

## **VII. Revocation/Suspension of Membership**

- A. Team membership is revocable by the Selection Review Board after a referral is made to the Team Coordinator. Anyone (CISM Team members, recipients of service, etc.) may make such a referral. It will be the responsibility of the Team Coordinator to form the Selection Review Board.
- B. Action is appropriate for, but not limited to, the following:
  - i. Failure to maintain strict confidentiality regarding any CISM intervention held, including topics discussed and personnel involved. Any breach in confidentiality by a member will result in the immediate removal of that member from the team.
  - ii. Failure to follow all local SOG's regarding team or program activity.
  - iii. Organizing, or in any way attempting to organize, any type of CISM intervention without the CISM Team Coordinator's prior knowledge or approval.
  - iv. Going to the location of an incident to act on behalf of the CISM Team without prior knowledge or consent of the CISM Team Coordinator.
  - v. Failure to be present at an assigned intervention or activity when the member has made the commitment to do so.
  - vi. Acting against the expressed direction of the Team Coordinator.
  - vii. Misrepresenting the affairs or operations of the CISM Team.
  - viii. Being habitually or continually absent from scheduled team meetings.
  - ix. Failure to complete required paperwork by the conclusion of the next scheduled shift.
  - x. Failure to meet the active status/meeting requirements.
  - xi. Membership on this team is a privilege and not a requirement to remain on the CISM Team, members must maintain the core

clinical competencies of their position as outlined on their performance evaluation. In addition, disciplinary action may jeopardize on-going membership.

## **VIII. Team Access and Deployment**

- A. Emergency services personnel and command officers are responsible for identifying and recognizing significant incidents that may require an intervention. When an incident is identified as a “critical incident”, any departmental member can make a request for an intervention at any time.
- B. The CISM Team is activated by notification to the Queen Anne’s County PSAP (Public Safety Answering Point). Appropriate call information is obtained and relayed to the team coordinator. All interventions are coordinated by the CISM Team Coordinator to guarantee the quality of the intervention and to ensure that appropriate procedures are followed.
- C. The CISM Team Coordinator assembles a team from available members. To assure the quality of the process, a minimum of two team members must attend an intervention.
- D. In the absence of the CISM Team Coordinator, a team member will be selected by the existing Team Coordinator to function as an Acting Team Coordinator. The Acting Team Coordinator will organize team functions for the duration of the Team Coordinator’s absence.

## **IX. Incident Assessment**

- A. A Team Coordinator may contact the agency requesting the intervention or the QAC PSAP to:
  - i. Assess the need for and the type of CISM Intervention needed.
  - ii. Determine the nature of the incident:
    - 1. Magnitude or scope of event
    - 2. Agencies involved
    - 3. Types of personnel involved (i.e. firefighters, EMS personnel, dispatcher, law enforcement, etc.)

4. Number of personnel involved

5. Symptoms displayed

- iii. Any CISM Team member who has responded to or is involved in the incident should not participate with the intervention process. This member may be able to provide valuable information to the Mental Health Professional and fellow team members.
- iv. Team members should coordinate a time and location to meet prior to the intervention to discuss the incident, any available resource information and the approach to be used during the intervention. Team members shall not visit the incident site before the intervention.



# Queen Anne's County Department of Emergency Services

## Emergency Medical Services Division

### Critical Incident Stress Management



**Subject:** Membership Application

<b>Personal Information</b>		
Name:		
Address:		
City:	State:	Zip:
Phone Information		
Home:	Work:	
Pager:	Cellular:	
Do you currently have a valid drivers license:      Yes:      No:		
State:	Class:	Number:
<b>Emergency Contacts</b>		
Name:	Relationship:	
Address:		
City:	State:	Zip:
Phone Information		
Home:	Work:	
Pager:	Cellular:	
Name:	Relationship:	
Address:		

City:		State:		Zip:	
Phone Information					
Home:			Work:		
Pager:			Cellular:		
<b>Do you have or have you ever had an Emergency Services Affiliation?</b>				Yes:	No:
Name:			Supervisor:		
Address:					
City:		State:		Zip:	
Phone:		Length or Service:		Years:	Months:
<b>Are you a Mental Health Professional?</b>				Yes:	No:
Degree:					
Do you hold any other certifications:					
Yes:		No:		Type:	
Business Name:					
Address:					
City:		State:		Zip:	
Phone:					
<b>Are you a member of the Clergy?</b>				Yes:	No:
Denomination:					
Church Name:					
Address:					
City:		State:		Zip:	
Phone:					
Do you have any CISM training:		Yes:	No:	Basic Peer	Advanced



**Briefly describe why you would like to be a member of the CISM Team:**

I have read the above statement and the information supplied on this application is true. I hereby authorize and request any and all of my references that I have named to furnish any and all information concerning my training, experience, and personal background. I hereby release such persons from any and all liability by reason of furnishing such information. I also understand that any misrepresentation or omission of facts requested in this application may be cause for revocation or suspension of membership. I further understand that completion of this application does not insure me of acceptance for membership.

Signature:

Date:

### **For Administrative Use Only**

Date application was received:

Date application was reviewed:

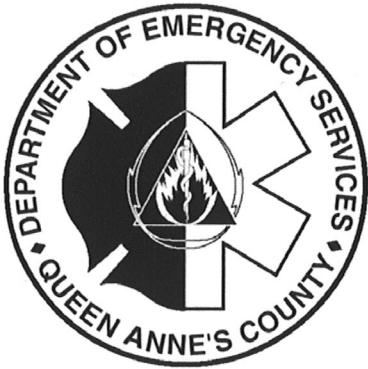
Date of applicants interview:

Accepted:

Denied:



**Queen Anne's County Department of Emergency Services**  
**Emergency Medical Services Division**  
**Critical Incident Stress Management**



**Subject:** Memorandum of Understanding

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (printed name) the undersigned agree that if I am selected to be a member of the QAC CISM Team, the following commitments must be met to maintain membership.

1. Each CISM Team Member must attend 50% of CISM sponsored training/meetings per year to maintain a status of active member in good standing.
2. Complete the Basic and Peer CISM class.
3. Suspension or revocation of membership may occur under any of the following circumstances but not limited to:
  - a. Failure to maintain strict confidentiality regarding any CISM intervention held, including topics discussed and personnel involved.
  - b. Organizing, or attempting to organize any type of CISM intervention without the coordinator prior knowledge and approval.
  - c. Failure to follow established policies or procedures.
  - d. Going to the location of an incident to act on behalf of the CISM Team without prior knowledge or consent of the CISM Team Coordinator.
  - e. Failure to be present at an assigned intervention or activity when the member has made the commitment to do so.
  - f. Misrepresenting the operations of the CISM Team or acting against the expressed direction of the Team Coordinator.
  - g. Using the CISM Team process or membership for personal and/or financial gain.

**Team Membership Criteria and Selection**

New members will be solicited through application and screened according to the following criteria:

1. Need for personnel or number of vacancies on the team.
2. Type of emergency service or specialty service needed.
3. Current membership.
4. Availability of training funds/opportunity.
5. Must successfully complete a minimum of ICISF approved Basic and Peer training courses to be active as a CISM provider.

The following is a list of criteria for selection of peer support personnel:

1. Emotional maturity.
2. Ability to maintain confidentiality.
3. Sensitive to the needs of others.
4. Willing to work as a team member.

I have read and understand the Memorandum of Understanding and will agree, if selected, to abide by all protocols.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Applicant Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Witness Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Witness Signature)



# QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY JOB DESCRIPTION

POSITION TITLE: Pastoral Care Volunteer

GRADE: Volunteer

FLSA STATUS: *Volunteer*

ESSENTIAL STATUS: *Non-Essential*

EFFECTIVE DATE:

DEPARTMENT: Emergency Services, Critical Incident Stress Management Team

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## **JOB SUMMARY**

The Pastoral Care Volunteer works with the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Team as a pastoral care specialist.

## **ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS**

Provide pastoral care support according to the ICISF model of CISM.

Provide cordial, responsive and accurate customer service.

## **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES**

Communicate with team members and emergency workers exposed to critical incident stress.

Receive referrals for distressed emergency workers.

## **CERTIFICATES, LICENSES, REGISTRATIONS**

ICISF Individual Crisis Intervention and Peer Support & Group Crisis Intervention within one year of appointment.

ICISF Advanced Group Crisis Intervention & Pastoral Crisis Intervention preferred.

Possession of a Class C Maryland Motor Vehicle Operator's License (or the equivalent from another issuing state) or the ability to obtain such a license within thirty (30) days of appointment to position.

## **NIMS TRAINING**

The following National Incident Management System (NIMS) Training is preferred within the first year of employment:

Courses 100 and 700

## **EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE**

Ordained clergy member

Previous experience working with emergency workers preferred.

## **PHYSICAL DEMANDS**

Standing for less than one hour.

Reasonable accommodations may be made for some of these physical demands for otherwise qualified individuals who require and request such accommodation.

## **WORK ENVIRONMENT**

Exposure to loud noise, critical incident stress, foul weather.

## **COMMENTS**

Volunteers must conform to applicable policies and safety rules.

This position is a volunteer position with the Queen Anne's County Department of Emergency Services. As a result, volunteers are not subject to the County's workers compensation benefit however a limited liability policy is provided.

This description lists the major duties and requirements of the job and is not all-inclusive.

# QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY JOB DESCRIPTION

POSITION TITLE: Mental Health Volunteer

GRADE: Volunteer

FLSA STATUS: *Volunteer*

ESSENTIAL STATUS: *Non-Essential*

EFFECTIVE DATE:

DEPARTMENT: Emergency Services, Critical Incident Stress Management Team

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## **JOB SUMMARY**

The Mental Health Volunteer works with the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Team as a mental health specialist.

## **ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS**

Provide mental health support according to the ICISF model of CISM.

Provide cordial, responsive and accurate customer service.

## **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES**

Communicate with team members and emergency workers exposed to critical incident stress.

Receive referrals for distressed emergency workers.

## **CERTIFICATES, LICENSES, REGISTRATIONS**

Licensed mental health professional as defined by Health Occupations Article, Annotated Code of Maryland

ICISF Individual Crisis Intervention and Peer Support & Group Crisis Intervention within one year of appointment.

ICISF Advanced Group Crisis Intervention preferred.

Possession of a Class C Maryland Motor Vehicle Operator's License (or the equivalent from another issuing state) or the ability to obtain such a license within thirty (30) days of appointment to position.

## **NIMS TRAINING**

The following National Incident Management System (NIMS) Training is preferred within the first year of appointment:

Courses 100 and 700

## **EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE**

Graduate-level education leading to eligibility to obtain mental health provider license.

Previous experience working with emergency workers preferred.

## **PHYSICAL DEMANDS**

Standing for less than one hour.

Reasonable accommodations may be made for some of these physical demands for otherwise qualified individuals who require and request such accommodation.

## **WORK ENVIRONMENT**

Exposure to loud noise, critical incident stress, and foul weather.

## **COMMENTS**

Volunteers must conform to applicable policies and safety rules.

This position is a volunteer position with the Queen Anne's County Department of Emergency Services. As a result, volunteers are not subject to the County's workers compensation benefit however a limited liability policy is provided.

This description lists the major duties and requirements of the job and is not all-inclusive.