




**PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND
FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER**

General Order Number: 08-03	Effective Date: February 19, 2016
Division: Health and Safety	
Chapter: Critical Incident Stress Management Team	
By Order of the Fire Chief: Marc S. Bashoor 	Issue Date: February 19, 2016

POLICY

This General Order shall set forth the policies and procedures for operation and utilization of the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Team.

The Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department recognizes that critical incidents can be stressful to personnel. Communication sessions known as Critical Incident Stress Debriefings (CISD) can facilitate stress management in the aftermath of a serious incident.

DEFINITIONS

N/A

PROCEDURES/RESPONSIBILITIES

I. Program Operation/Components

- A. The CISM Team members are selected by the Fire Chief or his designee. The Coordinator of the Employee and Volunteer Assistance Programs (EAP/VAP) will serve as the CISM Team Coordinator. The team shall consist of:
 - 1. Members of the EAP/VAP staff.
 - 2. Three representatives from the professional clinical community (i.e., social workers, psychologists, or nurse therapists).
 - 3. Three representatives from the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department.
 - 4. One member of the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department Chaplain Corps.
- B. Participation in annual in-service training, as well as quarterly meetings, is required to enhance team skills and knowledge.
- C. Applications for team membership will be accepted on an as-needed basis, and can be obtained by contacting the team coordinator.

II. Response

- A. The CISM Team shall be requested to disasters and critical incidents by the Fire Chief or Incident Commander to serve in an advisory capacity concerning critical incident stress symptoms in personnel. In addition, the team will provide on-scene support to any personnel who are on a work break during a prolonged incident.



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER

- B. A critical incident is defined as an incident on a smaller scale than a disaster that may have serious impact on personnel.
- C. Examples of critical incidents include, but are not limited to:
 - 1. Serious injury or death of emergency team member in the line of duty, or threat of serious injury or death.
 - 2. Serious injury or death of a civilian as the result of Fire/EMS Department activities, (i.e., investigator use of force/weapons discharge, motor vehicle collision involving apparatus, etc.).
 - 3. Death of a child, particularly if unusually tragic circumstances are involved.
 - 4. Any loss of life which follows prolonged expenditure of physical and emotional energy in rescue.
 - 5. Physical and/or psychological threat to rescuers, including hostage situations.
 - 6. Extremely negative attention from the media or community.
 - 7. Any mass casualty incident.
- D. Under normal circumstances, the only team members who respond directly to the scene of an incident shall be uniformed Fire/EMS personnel who are familiar with Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department policies and procedures. The Fire Chief or Incident Commander may request additional non-uniformed members on the scene of an incident to work in conjunction with uniformed CISM members.
- E. Upon arrival, team members will report directly to the command post for assignment. Non-uniformed members of the team shall be utilized away from the scene to provide short term diffusing sessions as personnel leave the incident and/or go off duty. In addition, all team members will be utilized in the aftermath of the disaster incident to provide critical incident debriefing services.

III. Activating the CISM Team

- A. Requesting the CISM Team is the responsibility of the Fire Chief or Incident Commander.
- B. Activating the CISM Team is the responsibility of the Executive Officer. If the Executive Officer is unavailable, the Duty Chief or OFC representative shall activate the CISM Team. In the case of multiple calls to the EAP/VAP from personnel on the call, the EAP/VAP Coordinator may request permission to extend critical incident debriefing services to personnel on the call. The CISM Team Coordinator shall be notified of a disaster or critical incident (as defined above) by way of Public Safety Communications, to the Watch Office, so that the team can prepare to respond if they are activated.
- C. Upon activation, the CISM Team Coordinator will gather information on the severity of stressors on the call and dispatch the team as appropriate. If the magnitude of the incident is beyond the scope of the team to provide complete services, mutual aid response from another CISM Team will be recommended by the Prince George's



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER

County Fire/EMS Department CISM Team to the Fire Chief. Upon approval of the Fire Chief, Mutual Aid CISM Teams will be called.

IV. Educational Services

The CISM Team Coordinator will facilitate and organize training for the Command Staff, Chief Officers and front line personnel regarding policies and procedures of the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department CISM Team.

REFERENCES

N/A

FORMS / ATTACHMENTS

CISM Activation Flyer



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY FIRE/EMS DEPARTMENT

PROCEDURES FOR ACTIVATING A CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT TEAM RESPONSE

FIRST: *Call the CISM Hotline at (240) 343-2467*

- The hotline is for initiating confidential one-on-one conversations and activating field interventions.
- Leave a message with a call back number and a brief description of the need.
- A message on the hotline will activate the pagers of the CISM shift leaders. If the shift leader is off duty, a backup team member on the same shift will be designated.
- The calling party should receive a return call within 15 minutes. If the shift leader is on a fire/rescue call, a second page will be sent to the pagers and a backup CISM member will respond.
- This phone line can be used **COMPLETELY ANONYMOUSLY**. However, the calling party must provide enough information for the team to either start an intervention or determine what the calling party thinks is needed.

SECOND: *Call the Fire/EMS Watch Office at (301) 583-2200*

- It is unlikely that the caller will not receive a return call with the hotline. However, if a call is not received, a page can be sent to a shift team leader anonymously by calling the PGFD Watch Office at (301) 583-2200 and having the call taker page the CISM team leader directly to check the hotline messages immediately.
- Once the team member is contacted via the PGFD Watch Office call taker, the team leader will immediately check the message and return the call within 15 minutes.