



TRANSIT POLICE

CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT

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Office of Primary Responsibility: Inspector Support Services

POLICY

[See also: AB190 - Employee Assistance Program, AB350 – Line of Duty Deaths]

Definitions

Chief Officer – The Transit Police Chief Officer or delegate.

Critical Incident – A Critical Incident is a challenging event that generates, or has the potential to generate, such intense emotional energy that it overwhelms an individual's coping mechanisms, causing impairment in work or personal activities. This includes, but is not limited to:

1. serious injury or death of a Member in the line of duty;
2. death or serious injury of a child;
3. Transit Police Personnel involved in a hostage taking or barricade situation;
4. a Member who discharges their service weapon in the line of duty or who is fired upon (including incidents where discharge is accidental);
5. any serious injury or death resulting from direct or indirect police action;
6. an event which results in multiple casualties;
7. serious injury or death (natural and unnatural) of a Transit Police Member or civilian staff person;
8. a Member who witnesses or investigates an extraordinarily violent crime;
9. serious or repeated threats made against a Member;
10. a Member called to an accident scene where family or close friends are involved; and
11. any other incident that is charged with profound emotion to the point where the Watch Commander believes it should be classified as a Critical Incident (e.g., attending sudden death on rapid transit system).

Critical Incident Stress Management Team (CISMT) – The CISMT will consist of Members trained to help personnel involved in Critical Incidents deal with such incidents, the goal being to minimize the negative effects on an involved person's health, safety, and general wellbeing. The CISMT will be responsible for the facilitation of a "Defusing" session with the involved personnel. A CISMT Leader and Assistant will be appointed from amongst the team Members.

"Defusing" Session – The purpose of a Defusing session is to offer information and support, stabilize involved personnel, and to determine the need for further supportive

action (e.g., formal debriefing). All personnel who were directly involved in the Critical Incident should be invited to attend this Defusing session. Such a session is usually led by at least two CISMT members. It is important to note that a Defusing session is not psychotherapy nor is it a substitute for psychotherapy – but rather, it is a group discussion which occurs in a non-judgmental setting where individuals can speak confidentially about their own normal reactions to an extraordinary event.

Member – A Designated Constable, the Chief Officer or a Deputy Chief Officer of the Transit Police.

Transit Police – The South Coast British Columbia Transportation Authority Police Service.

Transit Police Personnel – Sworn police officers and civilians who work for the Transit Police.

TSML – TransLink Security Management Limited, a subsidiary of the South Coast British Columbia Transportation Authority and legal entity/employer for the Transit Police.

Authority

1. The Transit Police is a Designated Policing Unit in British Columbia established pursuant to s. 4.1 of the *Police Act* upon application made by the SCBCTA. Pursuant to the application approval, the Transit Police is a part of TSML and all Transit Police Personnel are employees of TSML.

General

2. The Transit Police recognizes that its personnel may experience critical incident stress and require peer support to deal with such effects or stress resulting from traumatic events. The Transit Police will take a proactive approach in providing an organizational response to critical incident stress and cumulative stress of personnel, and establish a CISMT.
3. The CISMT will be made available to all Transit Police Personnel who are involved in or may be impacted by an on-duty Critical Incident or cumulative stress.
4. The CISMT will only be composed of Members who meet the selection and training requirements.
5. The CISMT is complementary to support available through the Employee Assistance Plan and other wellness and mental health services provided through the union (Canadian Office and Professional Employees), TSML and/or the Transit Police.

PROCEDURES

Operational Guidelines

6. All personnel will immediately notify their Supervisor when an incident has occurred which creates, or may create, a critical incident reaction on behalf of themselves or Transit Police Personnel.
7. Once a Critical Incident has occurred, the Supervisor will notify the Watch Commander.
8. Upon receiving notification of a Critical Incident, the Watch Commander will consider all circumstances and determine whether a CISMT response is necessary. The Watch Commander will be responsible for:
 1. notifying the Inspector Support Services and Inspector Operations (the Chief Officer and Deputy Chief Officers will also be notified as appropriate of the incident);
 2. contacting the CISMT Leader or Assistant to initiate the callout procedure for the CISMT;
 3. identifying all personnel (Members and civilians) involved in the incident;
 4. determining if in the circumstances that the involved personnel need to be transported for defusing, and if so, instructing a Member who has no direct involvement in the incident to transport the involved personnel to Police Headquarters;
 - a. under no circumstances should the involved personnel transport themselves;
 5. ensuring that any forensic examination or collection of evidence from the involved personnel has been satisfied prior to transport;
 6. ensuring completion of TP Form AZ950 A and B for WorkSafeBC claim (state "exposed to critical incident").

[Refer to SOP53 – Injuries in the Workplace]

9. The Supervisor, Watch Commander, and CISMT will consider the risk of further exposing the involved personnel to trauma that may accompany inappropriate comment or response from individuals not directly involved in the event.
10. The transporting Member will:
 1. refrain from discussing details of the incident with the involved personnel;
 2. upon reaching Police Headquarters, remain with the involved personnel until relieved by the CISMT, or until directed to do otherwise by a Supervisor; and

3. advise the OCC Dispatcher of the location of the involved personnel (by phone, where possible, versus over the radio) and any subsequent changes.
11. Upon receiving a request to call out the CISMT, the CISMT Leader or Assistant will:
 1. canvass the on-duty CISMT Members and notify them of the incident; and
 2. if no on-duty CISMT Members are available, the on-call CISMT Members will be notified;
 3. advise the Watch Commander (or designate) of the available CISMT Member(s) and request formal authorization for attendance of the CISMT Member(s).
 12. Upon receiving notification of a Critical Incident and attendance authorization from the Watch Commander (or designate), the CISMT Member(s) will:
 1. attend the location where the involved personnel are waiting;
 2. relieve the transporting Member, and initiate Defusing;
 3. advise the OCC Dispatcher and Watch Commander of any location changes (by phone, where possible, versus on air);
 4. liaise with the Watch Commander or designated Supervisor regarding the status and condition of the involved personnel;
 5. request additional CISMT Members to attend if needed; and
 6. at the earliest opportunity, advise the Inspector Support Services and Inspector Operations of the status and condition of the involved personnel.
 13. Upon receiving notification of a Critical Incident, where the Member is unable to care for themselves, the Watch Commander will ensure that the spouse or immediate family of the involved personnel are notified of the incident in person (or via telephone if deemed appropriate) by a Supervisor in a timely manner.
 1. Where the Member does not have a spouse or immediate family member, or those individuals cannot be reached, support of a colleague or friend may be sought.
 14. The Inspector Operations will be responsible for arrangement of any operational debriefings within 72 hours of the Critical Incident.
 15. Upon receiving notification from a CISMT Member that a Critical Incident has occurred, the Inspector Support Services will:
 1. as appropriate, cause the convening of a psychological debriefing within 72 hours of the Critical Incident, whenever practicable;

2. confirm with Inspector Operations that any operational debriefings have occurred prior to the psychological debriefing; and
3. determine whether the Police Chaplain is to be informed of the Critical Incident and arrange for chaplaincy services, as appropriate.

Duty Reports

16. The Transit Police recognizes the importance of the CISMT, and the success of this Team is based on its professional and confidential nature. Although unlikely, it is possible that information conveyed to CISMT Members during Defusing Sessions may be compellable in matters under the *Police Act* or in civil or criminal proceedings. In order to minimize this possibility, CISMT Members should pay particular attention to the following to ensure the integrity of the Defusing Session:
 1. verify to the Member that the Defusing Session is provided to support and stabilize the Member in the aftermath of the incident); and
 2. focus the Defusing Session on the welfare of the Member, how they are feeling and the support that they need in reaction to the incident.
17. The record of a Defusing Session occurring will be reported by the CISMT Member on Transit Police Form AZ1400 – CISM Team Member Callout,
18. The Inspector Support Services, in coordination with the Manager Human Resources, will monitor the occurrence of Defusing Sessions and initiate appropriate follow-up actions.

Duty Status

19. Transit Police Members who are CISMT Members and are called for CISMT activities while off-duty will be placed in an on-duty status.

CISMT Coordination

20. The CISM Program will be under the oversight of the Deputy Chief Officer Support Services, or as otherwise determined by the Chief Officer.
21. The CISMT training and selection criteria will be documented in writing, and approved by the Chief Officer or designate.
22. The Chief Officer or designate will assign a CISMT Leader and Assistant for internal coordination purposes.
23. Unless otherwise determined by the Chief Officer, the Inspector Support Services and CISMT Leader will be jointly responsible for the overall administration of the CISMT, including: on-going training, team meetings, recommending changes to the program or policy when required, and working with CISMT Members to ensure that program confidentiality requirements are adhered to by CISMT Members.

24. The CISMT Leader will ensure a current list of CISMT Members is maintained and provided to the OCC and Watch Commander, and to other designated personnel as directed by the Inspector Support Services.

Key References

BC Policing Standards (1994)