

MISSOULA POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY MANUAL



Subject: OFFICER INVOLVED CRITICAL INCIDENTS		
Effective Date: 1/13/2020	Original Date: 12/01/2006	Next Review: 1/13/2022
Chapter 7	Policy # 7.80	Distribution:
References:		

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines that shall be uniformly applied, following any officer-involved critical incident. The intention of the MPD is to properly investigate the incident while offering support to the involved personnel in order to mitigate the potential impact of such experiences on the health and well-being of those involved.

II. Policy

Law enforcement duties can often expose officers and support personnel to mentally painful and highly stressful situations that cannot be resolved through normal stress coping mechanisms. Unless adequately treated, these situations can cause disabling, emotional and physical problems. It has been found that officer-involved shootings resulting in death or serious bodily injury to a citizen or fellow officer may precipitate such stress disorders. It is the responsibility of this agency to provide personnel with information regarding stress disorders and to guide and assist in their deterrence. Therefore, it shall be the policy of this agency to take immediate action after such incidents to safeguard the continued good mental health of all involved personnel.

III. Definitions

Officer-involved shooting incident: A line-of-duty or under the color of authority incident involving purposeful or accidental discharge of a firearm, when the shooting causes death or serious bodily injury to an officer or other person.

Critical Incident:

- Any incident in which an officer causes serious bodily injury or death to another person.
- Any time a person dies while in custody of the Missoula Police Department.
- Any time an officer is exposed to a situation that would create great emotional distress, to include injury to an officer.
- Any time an officer is involved in a motor vehicle crash, which results in death or serious bodily injury.

IV. Procedures

- A. Handling officers at scene of incident

1. A supervisor shall be immediately dispatched or summoned to the scene of a known critical incident. The supervisor shall assume primary responsibility for the response to the incident. One of the primary duties of the supervisor is caring for involved personnel.
 2. The supervisor shall make appropriate arrangements for all necessary medical treatment of injuries if not already tended to.
 3. The supervisor shall order the scene to be secured and make arrangements to begin the proper investigation of the incident.
 4. The On-Call Staff Officer shall be called and notified of the critical incident as soon as reasonably possible.
 - a. The On-Call Staff Officer will notify the Chief of Police, Assistant Chief of Police and other staff officers as needed. The COP or ACOP shall determine if an outside agency will be called to investigate any part of the incident.
 5. During any period where the involved officer is required to remain on the scene, but has no immediate duties to fulfill, the officer will be taken to a quiet area away from the immediate area of the incident.
 - a. A peer counselor or other supportive friend or officer should remain with the officer(s), but will be advised not to discuss details of the incident.
 - b. A member of Missoula Police Protective Association Executive Board will be notified of an officer involved shooting or other critical incident as soon as practical.
 6. The supervisor should arrange for other officers closely involved in the incident to leave the scene as soon as possible and be taken to a quiet, secure and private setting.
- B. Procedures specific to a Critical Incident that has resulted from an officer's use of force.
1. An officer cannot be compelled to take a test to determine if the officer is under the influence of drugs or alcohol simply on the basis that they fired a weapon or were otherwise involved in a critical incident.
 2. An officer will be allowed to go through at least one full sleep cycle before having to write a report or provide more than preliminary information.
- C. Procedures Common to all Critical Incidents
1. Involved officers should notify their families about the incident as soon as possible. When an officer is unable to do so, a ranked officer shall personally notify his family and arrange for transportation as needed. Support officers and/or friends may be used for this duty too.

2. The supervisor should handle the officer and all involved personnel in a manner that acknowledges the stress caused by the incident, at all times.
3. The involved officer and family members need to be advised that the time frame before the involved officer is finished with preliminary requirements following the incident may be several hours at a minimum.

D. Post-Incident Procedures

1. Directly involved personnel may be placed on administrative leave pending evaluation but shall remain available for any necessary administrative investigations.
 - a. If the critical incident involved an officer's use of force which caused serious bodily injury or death the officer shall be placed on administrative leave.
 - i. Administrative leave does not imply that the officer acted improperly.
2. Any officer directly involved in a critical incident shall be required to meet with the agency designated mental health professional for counseling and evaluation as soon as practical after the incident in order to determine the officer's fitness to return to duty.
 - a. The counseling and evaluation shall occur prior to the officer's return to duty.
 - b. The mental health professional shall be requested to make recommendations regarding further need for counseling.
 - c. Arrangements for the appointment will be made by a staff officer.
 - d. After the counseling sessions, the mental health professional shall advise the department:
 - i. Whether it would be in the officer's best interest to remain on administrative leave or placed on light duty, and for how long.
 - ii. What will be the best, continued course of counseling.
3. Any agency investigation of the incident will be conducted as soon and as quickly as practical.
 - a. Involved officers and involved support personnel will be notified of all debriefings. The department shall make arrangements so that involved personnel can attend any debriefings they wish to attend.
4. A department staff representative will brief other department members concerning the incident. Department members are encouraged to show the officer involved their concern.

5. All personnel involved in a critical incident will be advised they are not permitted to speak with the media about the incident. Officers shall refer inquiries from the media to a designated department spokesperson, unless otherwise authorized to release a statement pertaining to the incident.
6. In order to protect against crank or abusive calls, officers should be advised to have phone calls answered by another person for several days if their names are released to the public.
 - a. In some cases, the involved officer may want to stay with a friend or relative for a few days. The involved officer will always keep the department advised of their location during the initial time period.
 - b. Officers should be aware that on-line media allows "blogs" for citizens to post personal opinions on events reported in the media. Those opinions may be insulting and/or offensive to the officers involved in a shooting and officers may want to avoid reading those posts.
7. Officers directly involved in the shooting incident shall be required to re-qualify with a temporary duty weapon as soon as practical.
 - a. Upon the return of the involved officer's assigned weapon, another re-qualification will take place.
8. Family members of the involved officer may take advantage of available counseling and/or support services through the EAP or contacting www.safecallnow.org.

E. Daily Stress Recognition

1. As post stress disorders may not arise immediately, or the officers may attempt to hide the problem, each supervisor is responsible for monitoring the behavior of unit members for symptoms of the disorder.
2. The Chief of Police may order an officer to seek assistance from mental health specialists upon a reasonable belief that the stress may be disrupting the officer's job performance.